ܟܬܒܐ ܕܣܘܢܗ̈ܕܘܣ
ܡܕܢ̈ܚܝܐ
ܕܥܕܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܐܬܘܪ̈ܝܐ

The Book of the Eastern Synods of the Assyrian Church of the East

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of the
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translated by

Rev. Michael J. Birnie

INTRODUCTORY NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR

The Syriac text used as the basis for the translation of this work is that edited by J.-B. Chabot in the *Synodicon Orientale ou recueil des synodes nestoriens (Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliotheque Nationale),* Paris, 1902. The work of this translation was initiated with the encouragement and support of the late Catholicos-Patriarch of the East, His Holiness, Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, who furnished photocopies of the Syriac portions from his personal library. After the Patriarch's death and a hiatus in the project, it was resumed under the prodding of the Bishop of the Western Diocese of the U.S., His Grace, Mar Bawai Soro. The manuscript was reviewed by the eminent Syriac scholar, Prof. Sebastian Brock, whose manifold suggestions have been gratefully received and incorporated. Proofreading was by my wife, Patricia, whose forbearance and cooperation allowed for some closure to be brought to this project. To all the above I am extremely grateful.

Textual Notes

When a change of page occurs in Chabot's text it is indicated in the translation by an insertion of the new number, which is set in braces, as {1}, {2}, etc. A bracketed or parenthetical portion within the Syriac text is invariably set in brackets [] in the translation. A word (or words) inserted by the translator for clarification is set in parentheses (). The headings and dates which precede each synod are provided by the translator.

The variety of spellings of proper names which appear in English language publications dealing with persons and geographical locations appearing in this document do more to confuse than to enlighten. I have transliterated the names using the commonly recognized equivalents of the consonants. Diacritical markings are here used to differentiate a ܗ (h) from a ܚ (ḥ), a ܬ (t) from a ܛ (ṭ), and a ܣ (s) from a ܨ (ṣ) and a ܫ (š). However, no attempt was made to differentiate ܒ ܓ ܕ ܟ ܦ ܬ (b g d k p t) in their hard forms from their soft or spirant forms, or the vowels "a" and "e" in their long and short forms, or to indicate a "shwa". I have avoided the common practice of doubling consonants between vowels when the first vowel is soft (*'Alaha,* not *'Allaha, 'Aba,* not *'Abba, etc.*) The ܥ is represented by (ʿ), the initial ܐ by (').

(THE SYNOD OF MAR ’ISḤAQ 410 AD)

By the living God we write the synodical canons established at various times by our holy fathers in the land of the East, and the canons established by Mar Maruta[1], the bishop of Maiparqaṭ when he went down to Persia on an embassy in the days of Yazdgard[2] the king and in the days of Mar ’Isḥaq[3] the catholicos, who sat at Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

An account of those things which were corrected in the assembly of bishops, which was the first in the land of the Persians; and of the canons and ordinances set forth in the West in the land of the Romans by the bishops there, to which the bishops in the land of the Persians also agreed; and of those which they on their own established and defined regarding the orders of bishops and metropolitans; and concerning the patriarch and the ranks of the clergy; and concerning the admonitions set forth for those in ecclesiastical service; and concerning the confession of faith of the fathers, the three hundred and eighteen bishops, to which the Persian bishops, who were forty in number, also appended such matters as they accepted, confirmed, and sealed concerning the rest of the canons which had been established by their words and signatures.

First:

The First Synod, of Mar ’Isḥaq the Catholicos:

In the eleventh year of the reign of the victorious King of Kings, Yazdgard, when {18} tranquillity and peace had come to the churches of the Lord, he[4] brought about deliverance and rest to the congregations of Christ, and gave the servants of God the authority for Christ to be openly magnified in their bodies, both in their lives and in their deaths. He rolled away the dark cloud of persecution from all the churches of God, and put away the blackness of affliction from all the flocks of Christ. He commanded in all his kingdom that the temples which had been torn down by his forebears should be magnificently rebuilt in his own days, and the altars which had been pulled down should be carefully supplied. Those who for the sake of God had been tried and tested by imprisonments and torments were to go out in the open, and priests and rulers, as well as the entire holy profession[5], were to move about freely without dread or fear.

These things happened in the days and through the election to the primacy of the honored and great man of God, our father, Mar ’Isḥaq, the bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the catholicos and head of the bishops of all the East. He was deemed worthy by God of this gift of all the East, for during his tenure and through his leadership the door of mercies was opened for the tranquillity and peace of his people and for the church of God, and his piety shone forth with greater honor than all the bishops in the East who preceded him. Through the encouragement and concerned effort of an ambassador of peace, an apostle who was sent to the East by God in his mercies, the wise father and honored ruler, Mar Maruta the bishop, a mediator of tranquillity and peace between the East and the West, he[1] concerned himself with the restoration of the churches of Christ the Lord and was diligent that the laws, divine ordinances, and upright and trustworthy canons which had been established in the West by the honored fathers, the bishops, might also be established in the East as an edifice of steadfastness and truth for all the people of God.

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[1] Died c. AD 420.

[2] Reigned 399-420.

[3] His catholicate lasted from 399-410.

[4] I.e., Yazdgard.

[5] This is a reference to the “Bnai Qyama” ܒܢ̈ܝ ܩܝܡܐ, or ܒܪ ܩܝܡܐ (sing.), “Sons of the Covenant,” who have taken some sort of ascetic vows and live a consecrated life, but not in monasteries.

In their care the rulers and fathers, the bishops of the Roman Empire, Porphyrius, bishop catholicos of Antioch, Acacius, bishop of Aleppo, Pqida, bishop of Edessa[2], Eusebius, bishop of Tella, and Acacius, bishop of Amida, are worthy of a good memorial before the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as (before) all our churches and congregations in the East, for, though physically they are far removed from us, they have fully revealed to us the strength[3] of their love for us and the anxiety (caused by) their separation from us, by writing a letter to their honored brother, the pride of our churches, Mar Maruta, and enjoining him with binding oaths that, without delay, their letter should be read before the illustrious and victorious King of Kings. Subsequently the honored Mar Maruta the bishop secretly showed the letter to his brother and yokefellow, joined with him in love and united with him in friendship, our father, the elect {19} of God, Mar 'Isḥaq, bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon and catholicos and chief bishop of the East. With one accord and with one perfect will they translated the letter from the Greek tongue to the Persian, and it was read before the victorious and illustrious King of Kings.

By the will of God, who put it into the heart of Yazdgard, the King of Kings, to provide all benefits and to perform every good thing — as it is written, "The heart of the king is like streams of water in the hands of the Lord, and he causes him to incline whithersoever he chooses"[4] — as soon as he heard it, Yazdgard the King, with a joyful mind, said, "East and West are one authority in the dominion of my kingdom." And because of the earnest solicitude of his heart he commanded that, by means of swift boatmen, they should hasten to the Marzbans[5] of the districts with a royal patent of his kingdom for the bishops, that they might be sent: that is, (to the bishop) of Nisibis and its jurisdiction, of Ḥdayab and its jurisdiction, of Beit Garmai and its jurisdiction, of Beit Huzaye and its jurisdiction, of Maišan and its jurisdiction, and of Kaškar. The names of forty bishops were written down[6], and they were sent for, that by their coming and in their council disputes might be brought to an end and schisms and division might no longer exist, and that they might accept and carry out those things which were proper and right for the order of the catholic church. Also, (that) their brothers, the bishops of Fars and of the districts remote from a judgment made concerning such bishops, might accept any decree made regarding them.

In the month of Kanon[7], on the holy feast of the Epiphany, they came to the great city, the chief of all cities of the East. The victorious and illustrious King of Kings heard of their coming and commanded our honored father, Mar 'Isḥaq, bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon and catholicos (and) chief bishop of the entire East, and his brother, Mar Maruta the bishop, that all should gather together at the cathedral church. The letter which was sent from the bishops in the West should be read in their presence, and they should obey and keep all that is written in it.

Then, at the beginning of the month of Šbaṭ[8], on the third day of the week, there occurred the revival which happened to us, the restoration of the dead which we observed, the deliverance which took place for us, the peace which was multiplied to us, and new things which were done in our generation during the days and under the primacy of our father, Mar 'Isḥaq, catholicos and chief bishop, and at the instigation of the husbandman of tranquillity and sower of peace, Mar Maruta the bishop, came to pass, specifically, on the day of the synod of bishops in the land of the East. Our mouth was opened in praise, our heart exulted in gladness, our tongues uttered thanksgiving, and in spiritual worship, with faith we extolled the living God and his Christ, the Savior, and the Holy Spirit, whom we cannot repay for these great things he has abundantly done for us. {20} Together we all besought our merciful God to add days unto the days of the victorious and illustrious king, Yazdgard the King of Kings, and (to) his years for ever and ever, and (that) he might be established unto ages of ages. At the glorious sight of the synod of bishops our soul was magnified as though we stood before the throne of the majesty of Christ.

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[1] The antecedent of this pronoun is Mar 'Isḥaq.

[2] Syr. Urhai.

[3] ?ܚܘܣܢܐ for ܚܘܣܝܐ.

[4] Prov. 21:1.

[5] The term "Marzban" indicates a district officer, a Marquis, or frontier warden.

[6] ܐܬܟܬܒܘ for ܐܬܟܬܒ.

[7] "Kanon" is the name of two months, Prior Kanon (December) and Latter Kanon (January).

[8] I.e., February. In the lunar calendar this would be February's new moon to that of March.

The heads of the synod [and elect fathers commanded that the letter which had been sent from the West] should be read [before the entire] new [synod] which had gathered in the East, and all of us — the forty bishops who had gathered from various places — gladly and with great eagerness listened to the letter and accepted everything written in it.

First, one concerning bishops: in a short time there shall no longer be two or three in one city, but one bishop in each city and its jurisdiction. Also, when a bishop is dying he is not allowed to consecrate another bishop, either at his death or during his life. Again, a bishop who is made by one or two bishops is invalid — (it is) only by three, even if the bishops are very far off. But this (must be) on the authority of a letter from the metropolitan archbishop.

Second: we should together, as one, keep the holy feast, the first-born of blessed feasts, the glorious day of the birth and epiphany of Christ our Savior. Again, as one, at one appointed time we should all alike keep the complete fast of forty days — seven weeks — and observe the feast of Holy Passover, and the great day of the crucifixion, passion, and resurrection of our Savior. Also, in all our churches one holy oblation should be offered to God, that is, the body and blood of Christ for the pardon of our living and the resurrection of our departed.

Third, perfecting all and adorning all that they[1] wrote to the honorable Mar Maruta the bishop: "If our Lord is pleased to hear our petition, and the victorious King of Kings commands, and the bishops gather and a synod takes place, we now have sent you all the appointed canons which were established in the great synod which took place in the city of Nicea in the days of the just and God-loving Constantine the victorious king, when three hundred and eighteen bishops gathered and, according to the fear of God which was in them, established and set forth steadfast admonitions, chaste laws, upright rules, glorious canons, and enlightening ordinances."

When we heard this passage from the letter of those honored members, immediately our holy father, worthy of a good memorial, in whose days our bent head was lifted up and tranquillity and peace came to us, Mar 'Isḥaq, bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon and catholicos (and) chief bishop, was the first to open his mouth, as the head of his members. {21} He said to his brother, joined in his love and in the concord of Christ, Mar Maruta the bishop: "Let them bring the volume in which the canons are written, and let it be read before the whole synod of these bishops." And when they had brought it and read it, and when we had heard from it all the provisions which were needed for the upright order of the ministry of the church of Christ and had learned from it all the canons which were composed in the wisdom of God by our fathers, the bishops in the great and holy synod of the West, our soul was exceedingly gladdened with perfect joy. First Mar 'Isḥaq the bishop, as the elect head of his members, said, "Anyone who does not agree to these glorious laws and upright canons and does not accept them shall be considered anathema by all the people of God and may not hold authority in the church of Christ." And all of us bishops alike gave consent with amen after him, and all of us spoke as he (had spoken).

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[1] I.e., the bishops in the West.

Then Mar Maruta said to us all, "All these admonitions, laws, and canons should be clearly subscribed." Then we all subscribed at the end of the decree with our signatures and confirmed (it) with an unchanging covenant. Mar 'Isḥaq the catholicos first said, "I place my signature at the head of them all." Then all of us bishops from all the various places promised after him that we too, all of us, would cheerfully accept and confirm with our signatures at the end all that was written above.

After some days our fathers, the honorable Mar 'Isḥaq, catholicos of the East, and Mar Maruta the bishop, spoke to the victorious and illustrious King of Kings, and he wisely and grandly issued a decree. He commissioned Kosrau Yazdgard, the Grand Vizier, and Mihr-Šabur, the Chief of Staff, and all of us bishops went in before them and together listened to each of them. Briefly, they spoke to us in this way: "Previously a great persecution came upon you and you went about secretly. Now the King of Kings has brought about great tranquillity and peace for you. Through the mediation of 'Isḥaq the catholicos before the King of Kings, whom he was pleased to make head over all Christians in the East, and especially from the day that Maruta the bishop came here in the friendship of the King of Kings, (bringing) the letter which came from the land of the Romans out of concern for the bishops here, tranquillity and peace has multiplied for you. So now Yazdgard, the King of Kings, commands thus: any man whom you desire to govern the people of God, and know to be suitable for rulership, and whom 'Isḥaq and Maruta establish, shall become the head. No one may be divided against them[1], and should {22} anyone rise up against them and resist their will, they shall inform us, and we shall inform the King of Kings. He shall have himself to blame for the evil which will come heavily upon him, whoever he may be." Then we left there together.

Again Mar 'Isḥaq, catholicos of the East, and his honored brother, Mar Maruta the bishop, said to us, "On the day when the council of the synod took place and the canons and ordinances were read before you — how that the rules, limitations, and jurisdiction of each of the bishops in the various cities should be — you all heard and accepted. Now whatever is necessary for the conduct of the ministry of the catholic church should be written down in an edict, and you should sign and ratify (it) with an inviolable and indissoluble covenant." And all of us said in a loud voice, "Yea, (so) we do and determine gladly. Whoever does not render acceptance, but subsequent to this decree is carried away by the tumult of his own mind, shall be cast out completely from the entire church of Christ together, and there shall no longer be healing for his sickness. In addition he will receive in judgment the swift sentence of the King of Kings, and shall be thrown into bitter bonds in shame and disgrace."

Then we all took upon ourselves completely, with an unchangeable covenant, an inviolable oath, an indissoluble contract, and an immutable decree — and we asked the notary to write down — that foremost in all the churches, prayer, petition, intercession, and supplication should be offered before God, his Christ, and his living and holy Spirit on behalf of kings and rulers, that they may occupy a quiet and tranquil habitation and may not entertain a high and obdurate mind toward the people and church of God.

The Symbol of Faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Bishops:

We believe in one God, the omnipotent Father, Maker of heaven and earth and all visible and invisible things; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was begotten of the Father, the Only-begotten, that is, of the essence of the Father, God from God and Light from Light, true God from true God, who was begotten and not made, co-essential with the Father, by whom everything came into being in heaven and on earth, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnated and inhominated, and suffered and rose after three days, and ascended to heaven, and is coming to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit.

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[1] I.e., 'Isḥaq and Maruta.

But those who say {23} that there was a time when he did not exist, and before he was begotten he did not exist, and that he was made from nothing; or say that he was of some other qnoma[1] or essence, or consider the Son of God changeable and mutable, such the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.

The Canons Which Were Established in the Synod, Being Twenty-one in Number:

First: concerning an election and the order in which bishops ought to come for an ordination[2].

Every bishop who is made by one or two bishops shall be invalid, both he who is made and he who makes. But when a bishop is made, the bishops shall assemble at the city and, with counsel, they shall inquire and seek out a man who is solicitous toward the poor, receives strangers, relieves the distressed, supports the orphans and widows, does not lend money usuriously, does not take a bribe, does not show favoritism in judgment, and separates himself from pride and greed; who meditates upon precept and wisdom and on the teaching of the Scriptures day and night, and has the understanding and discrimination to administer all things due to the church which are necessary for the ministry. When the bishops are gathered with his people and with his church before the altar of Christ at the hour when the oblation is made ready, they shall place the Gospel upon his head and together stretch forth the right hand over him, and the chief among them shall recite the consecrating (prayer). Afterwards, the bishop who was ordained shall come and be completed by the great metropolitan, the catholicos of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, bringing a letter from the bishops who ordained him. However, should any of us venture to make another bishop during his own life or at his death, (both) he who is made and he who makes shall be cast out without mercy from the entire clergy of the church.

Second Canon: concerning eunuchs who mutilate and castrate their members[3].

Concerning eunuchs: according to what was commanded {24} by the synod and we also observe, any man who willfully makes himself a eunuch and damages his fruitful nature, the same shall not be received in the church. But if he was mutilated in his youth, or by his masters through force, or by barbarians, or in his infirmity he was operated on by doctors, he may be received in the clergy of the church, for the canon of the blessed fathers (so) allows.

Third Canon: concerning female co-habitants[4], that they may no longer dwell with clergy according to the previous custom.

Again, concerning female co-habitants: according to what was established by the synod, we all enact that hereafter any man, (whether) bishop, presbyter, deacon, sub-deacon, or religious[5], who makes his dwelling with women and not chastely and in holiness by himself, as is solely proper for the ministry of the church — men with men alone[1] — the same shall not be received in the ministry of the church.

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[1] Here qnoma is used in the sense of "substance" or "nature".

[2] Canon 4, Nicea.

[3] Canon 1, Nicea.

[4] These are the "subintroductae" (see Canon 3, Nicea).

[5] Bar Qyama, lit., Son of the Covenant.

Fourth Canon: concerning clergy who are turned aside by impure profits[2].

Again, concerning impure profits, interest, and usury, what was commanded in the synod we gladly observe. Henceforth, any man who is in the ministry of the church in one of the ranks of the clergy and has to do with usury and interest shall become a stranger to the ministry, and he shall have no contact with us.

Fifth Canon: that believers ought not to apply themselves to auguries, divinations, and alien practices.[3]

Auguries, divinations, and alien works of impiety and sin which are related to paganism, and spells, amulets, witchcraft, and the service of demons, these all and their practitioners shall be considered anathema and accursed, and shall be alienated from all our churches and fellow-believers. Whoever is found in any of these things shall be cast out without mercy from the whole church of Christ and there shall never be mercy for him.

Sixth Canon: concerning the assembly of bishops: when, where, and for what reasons ought it to take place.[4]

(Concerning) this canon {25} which was established in the synod — that twice a year there should be a synod in which the bishops should gather so that in their council all disputes and accusations might be brought to an end — we made a strong appeal to the heads of the synod that once in two years, when the king is in Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and the great metropolitan who occupies the see of Koke[5] writes to us, we will assemble gladly and will come for the veneration and honor of his fatherhood. All that he commands us we will carry out unreservedly in the fear of God, and the laws which Christ our Lord establishes for us we will accept, and will fulfill his will with fear and trembling.

Seventh Canon: concerning houses which are set apart for the entertaining of strangers; and concerning the needy, that they ought to be received through letters of recommendation[6].

Again, concerning the house in which strangers and the poor are received, which is to be designated in all the churches, we are persuaded that they should be received through a letter from a bishop to his colleague, or from a presbyter to his equal.

Eighth Canon: That it is not lawful for those clergy who are invited to a supper or an Agape to demand and take away portions from that place, or to eat in a tavern, or to sit down at dinner associations.[7]

Again, that presbyters, deacons, and sub-deacons may not come to Agapes of the poor unless one has been designated a supper of the clergy, and they are not allowed to take portions from that place, lest they bring disgrace and abuse upon the freedom of the church. No one who is in the church, whether of the presbyters, or deacons, or from the sub-deacons, religious[1], consecrated persons[2], or door-keepers, is allowed, in any case, to take a seat at dinner associations, whether at a funeral or in taverns.

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[1] A footnote in Chabot has the variant addition "and women with women alone".

[2] Canon 17, Nicea.

[3] Canon 36, Laodicea.

[4] See canon 7, Arabic Canons of Nicea.

[5] This is the cathedral church of the Catholicos-Patriarch.

[6] Canon 7, Antioch.

[7] See Canons 24 and 27 of Laodicea.

Ninth Canon: concerning the proprieties due to the observance of the service on the first day of the week.

That on all Sundays the Gospel shall be read along with the other Scriptures and the word of God declared until the third or fourth hours. Then the oblation shall be offered.

{26} Tenth Canon: that each and every one of the bishop metropolitans ought to acquire a copy of these canons in order to study them and to establish from them what is right according to the agreement made concerning their keeping.

Because of the great quantity of subject matter in these canons, we agreed that each bishop metropolitan in charge of three, four, or five bishops should write down these canons. They should remain continually in his presence and from them he should establish what is necessary by his command and by his authority. We ourselves bear witness before the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that we will not at all depart from these glorious laws and enlightened ordinances, neither we nor those who come after us. And as our faith, our baptism, and our church are one, and we worship one Being of the Holy Trinity, so also those who come after us in succession in all our congregations and flocks will be born and reared in the fear of the Lord Christ henceforth and forever.

Eleventh Canon: that there ought not to be an ordination of any bishop by one bishop alone; and concerning clergy who have been suspended by their bishop.

From now on the disorder which has existed among us should no longer continue. One bishop cannot make another, but we shall observe what is written above. Again, a bishop may not, in a disorderly fashion, transgress the boundary of his colleague. He should not do to his colleague that which is unacceptable to himself. A presbyter or deacon who has been bound by his bishop and rebels against him may not be received by another bishop.

Twelfth Canon: concerning the honor which is proper and due to the catholicos who occupies the see of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

All of us together willingly have agreed — and have also been commanded by Yazdgard, the King of Kings — that we bishops of all the territories of the East and those who come after us shall be subject to the bishop catholicos, the head of the bishops and metropolitan of Seleucia and Ctesiphon — that is to every bishop who sits upon this great throne of the church of Koke — in all {27} due matters which are commanded, until the coming of Christ.

Thirteenth Canon: concerning the ordinances and canons which are appropriate to the liturgy, and to the Holy Mysteries, and to the glorious feasts of our Savior.

Also, the western liturgy which 'Isḥaq and Maruta the bishops taught us and all of us saw celebrated here in the church of Seleucia, henceforth we shall celebrate together in the same manner. The deacons in every city shall proclaim the litany like this, and the

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[1] Bnai Qyama.

[2] For ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ.

Scriptures shall be read thus, and the pure and holy oblation shall be offered upon one altar in all the churches, and the usage[1] of ancient memory shall no longer exist among us. The oblation shall no longer be offered from house to house, and we shall celebrate together the great feast of the epiphany of our Savior and the great day of his resurrection as the metropolitan, the chief bishop (and) catholicos of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, makes known to us. Whoever ventures to celebrate alone, in his church and among his people, the great feast of the nativity, the fast of forty days, and the great day of the unleavened bread, separating himself from the agreement of the church of the West and of the East, shall be cast out without mercy from the entire ministry of the church as a baneful man, and there will be no more remedy for him.

Fourteenth Canon: concerning chorepiscopoi.

Again, the disorder of many chorepiscopoi for one bishop may not continue. Instead, one chorepiscopus for each bishop is enough, and where there are many they should be dismissed.

Fifteenth Canon: concerning the choice of an archdeacon, and concerning the ordinances which are proper to his ministry and to his administration; and concerning stewards; and concerning the censure of the scornful.

One archdeacon shall be designated for the bishop in a city, one who is articulate and wise in word and doctrine, is attentive toward the poor and solicitous of strangers, and is able to direct and command all that is proper in the service of the church. On Sunday, when the bishop is present, he shall proclaim the litany of the deacons upon the bema, {28} read the Gospel, and command every action which takes place in the service. He shall be the arm, tongue, and venerator of the bishop, and the hidden will of the bishop shall be brought to pass openly through him. He shall seat the presbyters on the benches and shall stand in the row at the head of the deacons when the bishop is sitting upon the throne. He shall place the sub-deacons, who are called "exorcists" by us, at the doors at the hour of service, and he shall command the giving of the Scriptures to the readers. He shall assign to the presbyters, deacons, and sub-deacons the weeks that they are to give baptism, perform the duties of the altar, and tend to the sanctuary and its adornment. It shall be this way in all the churches in which there is a bishop. Those who receive the weeks[2] shall be maintained by the church, and their bedroom shall be in the diaconion. In every church and city men shall share out the weeks.

Concerning the offerings and gifts of the church which are committed to a certain faithful steward, hereafter this shall be the law: the keys of stewardship shall be placed upon the altar, and he who is (to be) the steward shall take them from the altar. When he resigns from his stewardship or the bishop is pleased to remove him, he shall go and place the keys upon the altar, and he will receive from the holy altar, either good or ill, as he is deemed worthy.

Each and every presbyter who is in a city, who is not suffering an illness, but is not sitting upon the benches with his colleagues at the hour of prayer, and is not before the altar at the hour of the oblation, shall cease from his ministry. The archdeacon will tell a certain presbyter to offer the oblation when the bishop is away, but when the bishop is present, the bishop is empowered to command as he wishes.

It is the same with deacons — each and every deacon who is in a city and is not suffering an illness, but is not present at the hour of prayer and does not stand with the people in the row of the deacons. Also, when he is commanded by the archdeacon to take the Scripture and to ascend the bema and read, after he reads he is not allowed to leave the people and sit within the diaconion — unless he is ill — but shall stand with his colleagues in the row for the rest of the hour. The archdeacon is empowered to render judgment {29} duly upon the deacon who despises these proprieties.

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[1] ܫܪܒܐ.

[2] I.e., those who are assigned weekly to discharge the daily offices.

It is also the same for the sub-deacons: each and every one of them who is not found in the church at the hour of the service — unless he is sick or away on a journey, or there is some hindrance for him — and is not occupied in the Psalms and does not attend to the door of the sanctuary at the hour of service, shall be cast out, that this laxity may not corrupt many.

To him who is the archdeacon belong the responsibilities of consulting and inquiring after each one, and none of the presbyters, deacons, or sub-deacons is allowed to go to any village without his advice. Great care is required of the archdeacon as well, that he might serve strenuously and prudently in the church of Christ, that he might be a good example to many, for he is the lamp of the church and a light before the bishop by his word and his teaching.

This ancient custom shall not continue, that when an older presbyter is present, a presbyter who is younger does not offer the oblation, and for this reason all the presbyters and deacons leave and go out in order "to give opportunity to those who are younger." Also, in the presence of the bishop one who is younger than he in years is allowed to offer the oblation if it is commanded by him. Only, when the bishop is away and any presbyter, great or small, is offering, none of the presbyters and deacons is allowed to leave the altar and depart. Also, it is proper to render honor to one another, according to the saying of the blessed Paul, who said, "One should consider his colleague to be greater in honor than himself."[1]

Sixteenth Canon: concerning the order which should properly exist for clergy who are called and come for ordination.

As for this vile and lax custom, which came into being in a disorderly way, that easily and hastily the right hand is indiscriminately placed upon those who are young and do not know the teaching of the Scriptures — henceforth this limitation shall exist according to the command of the synod: ordination to the presbyterate shall not be given to one who is less than thirty years. Again, the bishop is not allowed to ordain presbyters and deacons in ordinary places, but only in churches before the altar, in monasteries, and where the sacrament is consecrated. One who is unlearned in teaching, if he cannot recite David[2] orally, cannot even {30} be a sub-deacon, but should be reproved until he learns to recite David orally, for because of this laxness there has been darkness in the churches. If he previously happened to receive ordination to the diaconate or the presbyterate, let him now recollect his mind and be instructed in doctrine, that the ministers of Christ may not be like laymen, ignorant in their speech and doctrine.

Seventeenth Canon: again, the agreement and covenant of the bishops concerning the keeping of these canons; and concerning the censure which they decreed against the scornful who neglect them.

All of us bishops who have gathered from various places according to the command of the victorious and illustrious Yazdgard, the King of Kings, have accepted gladly all these admonitions, beginning with our father and head, Mar 'Isḥaq the bishop and metropolitan, (and) catholicos and head of the bishops, and all of us together. May the fire of God fall upon anyone who ventures to transgress any of these commandments, and may the wrath of God remain upon him. May he be bound and anathematized from the entire church of Christ in the four regions. Because of the disorder which previously existed due to ancient custom, it was arranged that all the requisites needed for the reformation of the churches which are in the East and the bishops in them who are over them, be written down in this edict and established for the generations to come, so that from this time on the previous tumult may never occur again. The names of these bishops have been written down and the authority which is given them, and by the command of the synod they have accepted that, for those who come after them, this limitation should also be placed upon them. May the binding and anathema written above, as well as the punishment of the King of Kings, remain upon anyone who ventures to transgress the canon. Any bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon is empowered to make another bishop in his (the offender's) place, and to appoint one who agrees with the correct opinion of the church to his position. However, even a bishop metropolitan, when he makes and establishes a bishop in his place, is not allowed to do this alone, but (only) when five bishops are with him, or, at the very least, three. In the case of the bishop who is in harmony with the church and is led by these canons written above, he shall have a good memorial in all the churches and flocks of Christ, and he[1] will give glory to him in the world which does not pass away, and bring (him) to life; and he will receive a good reward with all who have served well and attain good ranks with much confidence in the kingdom of heaven.

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[1] Phil. 2:3.

[2] I.e., the Psalms.

{31} Eighteenth Canon: concerning the primacy of order which is owed to the metropolitans; and concerning those things which are owed to them by each one of the bishops under them.

And the names of the cities whose rulers are valid, and the cities over which they are appointed: for each city its name and designation, and the head in it who is the bishop there[2].

The bishop who is placed over them[3] shall be a helper and encourager for them in all due matters, and when there is a dispute among them he shall bring peace to them through the counsel of love, not through the power of coercion.

Every bishop is empowered in his own land and city to make presbyters and deacons, to make disciples, to build churches, and to add to all of them such refinements as he desires, that he might be a good example to his colleagues. To a bishop metropolitan who is placed over his brother bishops in various places so as to be honored among them in rank belongs the right in his region to write and inform the great metropolitan concerning every matter which comes up among the bishops who are near him and under his control. If it happens that there is some accusation between a bishop and his colleague, or (against) a presbyter or deacon by his bishop, or (if) a bishop, whoever he may be, does not conduct himself according to the proprieties of the ministry, the bishop metropolitan who is placed over them should restore order among them with love, understanding, and kindness, according to what has been established in the canons of the great synod. But if any matter whatsoever is too difficult for the metropolitan and he is not able to resolve it in peace, let him write and inform the great metropolitan and be rid of the vexation. It will belong to the catholicos to write [and according to his wisdom] give command and make resolution.

Nineteenth Canon: that a bishop is not permitted to act despotically or deal oppressively with one of his fellow bishops.

A bishop who becomes a metropolitan {32} is not allowed to exercise his authority violently, so as to enter the jurisdiction of the diocese of any of those bishops over whom he has been placed, or to write and demand things violently. Instead, (remaining) in his own place, let him write to the bishop of the diocese concerning certain accusations he has heard (about). If he is responsive to him (well and good); if not, let him inform the great metropolitan as written above. If the bishop of a diocese is so inclined, and on a memorial of martyrs seeks out the metropolitan who is placed over him to invite him to his diocese, such belongs to a bishop, whoever he may be, that he may please the bishop who is greater than he.

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[1] I.e., Christ.

[2] The portion I have italicized seems to be a misplaced heading.

[3] The plural pronoun here refers to the ordinary bishops. The "bishop who is placed over them" refers to the metropolitan.

Twentieth Canon: concerning the order which is proper for the metropolitans to employ in an election and ordination within their jurisdiction.

When a bishop from one of the dioceses over which he is placed dies, a metropolitan is empowered to gather the other bishops and to establish a bishop with whom the city is pleased, and after he has established him to send him with a letter to the great metropolitan to be completed by him. Other than these things a bishop metropolitan has no authority over the bishops who are under his control. Also, he is not allowed to make a demand upon them through avarice or greed, or in a matter of taking or giving[1].

Twenty-first Canon: concerning the order and honor of precedence of the provinces and sees of the metropolitans, and the bishops under their control, one after another.

Since in this decree the bishops in the particular cities are named, the sees of the metropolitans are also made known one after another, and the bishops under their control are set forth: corresponding to the greatness of a city (its) see is also honored. Disorder and tumult have been found in all dioceses, among which are cities whose bishops should be cast out and rejected, for a certain Mḥapṭa and Mara ...... nearby and here was ...... and in Karka, which our bishops ...... and 'Agapeṭa, Mara, Baršabṭa, and Šila, and they impudently gave them empty ordinations ...... each of them to usurp the primacy for himself, and {33} laymen were also carried off by their tumult, vain pride attracting each faction to itself, (therefore) it is necessary for us to distinguish and make known the sees one after another. We have decreed in this synod for the bishops of both these cities — that is, of Beit Lapaṭ and of Karka — that each of them remain in his church in his own congregation, and one of them may not have authority over his colleague. Until all of them pass away they will have no authority to make presbyters or deacons either in the city or in a village. Concerning the bishops, they may not act against any of the bishops[2] listed above, and this decree is established with anathema.

Those sees which are honored and are set forth one after another because of the greatness of the city:

Even if one who is young occupies a particular see, honor is rendered to him because of his see and because of his city.

The first and chief see is that of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and the bishop who occupies it is the great metropolitan and head of all the bishops. The bishop of Kaškar is reckoned with this diocese of the (great) metropolitan, and he is his right hand and fellow servant and governs his see after him. Henceforth the metropolitan of a diocese is under the control of the great metropolitan who occupies the see of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

After this (is) the see of Beit Lapaṭ the metropolitan of Beit Huzaye. Therefore, when those bishops who have been restricted have departed, a bishop who is made by the metropolitan of Seleucia (will) be bishop metropolitan over his fellow bishops.

After this (is) the see of Nisibis, and the bishop who occupies it is metropolitan disorderly man from among them, who is present now, whose name is Daniyel, who received a worthless ordination from the bound and execrated Baṭi, shall be bound and anathematized by this synod. He must go out of the entire district into which he brought commotion and must not be found in it, but must go to his own land bound, dismissed, and rejected.

The peace of the Lord Christ be with those who follow the clear pathway of the true faith of the catholic church of the apostles.

The Signatures

I, ’Isḥaq, bishop catholicos, agree to everything written above.
I, Maruta the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Hoša‘, bishop of Nisibis, agree to everything written above.
I, Zabda, bishop of Prat, agree to everything written above.
I, Daniyel, bishop of ’Arbil, agree to everything written above.
I, ‘Aqbalaha, bishop of Karka, agree to everything written above.
I, Yazdaidad the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, ’Agapeṭa the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Milis the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Bar Šabta the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Mara the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Šila the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, ‘Abdišo‘ the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Zoqa the bishop, agree to everything written above.
{36} I, Bar Ḥaila the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Daniyel, bishop of ’Arzon, agree to everything written above.
I, Šmuel, bishop of ’Arzon of Baita dAustan, agree to everything written above.
I, Mihrbozyad the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Mari, bishop of Maišan, agree to everything written above.
I, ’Abraham, bishop of Rima, agree to everything written above.
I, Yoḥanan, bishop of Nhargor, agree to everything written above.
I, ’Isḥaq the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Baryanos the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Paulos the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, ... the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Mari, bishop of Kaškar, agree to everything written above.
I, Baṭa the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Yausep, bishop of ’Ariwan[1], agree to everything written above.
I, Yoḥanan, bishop of Garyatan, agree to everything written above.
I, ’Abraham the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Mara the bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, Milis of Prat[2], bishop, agree to everything written above.
I, ’Abi, bishop of Rima[3], agree to everything written above in this holy synod.
I, ‘Abdišo‘, bishop of Nhargor[4], agree to everything written above in this holy synod.
I, Milis, bishop of Zabe, agree to everything written above in this holy synod.
I, Hoša‘, bishop of Ḥirta, have confirmed everything written above.
I, Šem‘on Bardoq, bishop of Šošter[5] confirm everything written above.

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[1] In the list in the text above a Yoḥanan is named bishop of ’Ariwan.
[2] But see above for Zabda of Prat.
[3] But see above for ’Abraham of Rima.
[4] But see above for Yoḥanan of Nhargor.
[5] In the list in the text ’Abišo‘ is listed as bishop of Šošter. Can these latter names be later additions after changes in episcopal sees due to death?

I, 'Eliya, bishop of Mašmahig, confirm everything written above.

The Synod of Mar 'Isḥaq is concluded.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR YAHBALAHA 420 AD)

{37} Again, the synod of Mar Yahbalaha[1], catholicos of Beit Lapaṭ, Nisibis, Fars, Armenia, Prat dMaišan, Ḥdayab, Beit Garmai, Gorzan, Beit Maḏaye, 'Aran, 'Abrašahar, Azerbaijan, the islands, 'Isṭahar, Karka, 'Arzon, Šuš, Šošter, Balašpar, Dasqarta, Zaḇe, Piroz Šabur, Dargerad, Beit Daraye, Šabur-Kost, 'Ardašir-Prihad, Beit Šabur, Ṣimart.

(This synod took place) in the twenty-first year of the reign of the victorious Yazdgard, the King of Kings, whose kingdom has been prolonged by the grace of God for the sake of the tranquillity of the whole world, and whose mercifulness has spread abroad for the exaltation of the churches and flocks of Christ in all the East. (It occurred) during the administration of the blessed priesthood of the honorable, great, and elect of God, Mar Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos and chief bishop of the East. (This was) at a time during the fifth year of his primacy when the honorable Mar Acacius, the bishop of the city of Amida, was sent on an embassy from the king of the Romans to the victorious and peace-loving King of Kings for the sake of the tranquillity and peace of the churches and congregations of Christ in the East, that he might repay by his coming the embassy of our father, the holy priest and honorable Mar Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos and head of all the bishops in the East, (an embassy) which was (sent) from the illustrious, victorious King of Kings, who desires peace, in the nineteenth year of his reign[2], and in the third year of the administration of the priesthood of our honored father, Mar Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos of the East. He had been sent on the embassy from his own kingdom to the king of the Romans with honor and great pomp for the sake of the tranquillity and conciliation of these two kingdoms, which are the mighty shoulders of the world. At this time, when our two fathers, the priest-envoys, were constantly in the presence of the King of Kings in the city of Beh-'Ardašir[3], all of us bishops of all the lands of the East gathered for the salutation {38} and veneration of our honored father, Mar Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos of the East, and for the sight of his honorable brother, Mar Acacius the bishop and ambassador, and we offered this petition before our fatherhood and before the honorable Mar Acacius with one accord and with one will:

"Now that your fatherhood has gone up on an embassy to the West and your priesthood has been joined with the holy priests in those glorious cities in every ministry of the catholic church, and your honorable brother, Mar Acacius the bishop, has also come down on an embassy to this place, and has agreed with your honorable priesthood and with us upon all that is proper to the order of the priesthood, it is incumbent upon us that we ask for, write down, seal, and ratify with our seals and signatures the glorious ordinances which, through succession from the blessed fathers, the apostles, were fittingly established for the administration of the priesthood, as well as the steadfast laws and canons which were established in the synods of bishops which took place in the West at various times during the years of the truly God-loving Constantine, the victorious king, when the three hundred and eighteen bishops gathered in the city of Nicea, and the other canons which were established by the synod which took place in Ancyra of Galatia, and in Syria and Cappadocia, and the additional canons which were established by the synod [which took place] in the city of Caesarea, and the further canons which were established by the synod which took place in the city of Gangra, and the further canons which were established by the synod which took place in the city of Antioch at the dedication of the church, and the further canons which were established by the synod which took place in the city of Laodicea of Phrygia."

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[1] Ruled c. 415-420.

[2] I.e., AD 418.

[3] I.e., Seleucia.

Then he[1] gave orders to the notary, who took our dictation and wrote the same down with the agreement of us all and the unanimous will of our company:

"Since our worshipful God has spoken to the fathers of old in manifold and sundry ways[2], and has especially lavished his assistance upon the race of men — even to this day employing his customary mercies (in his dealings) with those who call upon his name, visiting his church with all good things and bestowing helpful medicines through his associates and the heads of his flocks upon the sheep who are saved by his blood — because of the sincere mind of the fathers, the bishops who were gathered from time to time in holy synod, he placed in their mouth those things which were needed for the reformation, sustenance, and organization of the churches. By the power of the divine Spirit they received helpful, life-giving, and corrective laws for those who agree to the truth, that they might affirm the inscrutable Trinity and incomprehensible Lordship, that primacy might be arranged in order, the priesthood[3] preserved, the clergy[4] {39} maintained, and laymen delivered from the pit of sin. The order of penance was instituted[5] as (a means of) ascent for those before whom Satan, the enemy of humanity, had spread out allurements and whose offenses he had multiplied, troubling them with his hidden wiles. At the breaches which his perfidy had multiplied in the world they set up laws as watchmen and deliverers, that sin, because of the fearful sharp (sword-)point[6] in the commandment itself, might not be active but hindered, and from fear and dread of retribution its root might wither and it might not bear the fruits of lust through the irrigation[7] (provided by) pleasures, so that the enemy[8] of humanity might be smitten[9] withal by the blow which he (himself) strikes, and be slain by the slaughter which he (himself) renders.

"And because these things were established in the holy synod by the episcopal fathers in the tradition of the holy and Spirit-endued apostles, all the churches Christ our Lord in the entire dominion of the Romans with all their leaders have long since gladly accepted and observed all these helpful laws with all diligence. Yet in the churches of our lands, (because) they have been deprived of these things, much confusion has existed, and disputes and divisions have been engendered from place to place because of disorderly rulers. The Christian flock has fed on trampled pasture and has drunk the waters which their strife has troubled. Sicknesses and diseases have multiplied in it, and for lack of commandments and therapeutic laws, the leprosy and corruptionof sin has appeared in it, for such things stand in opposition to the tradition of the illustrious apostles and the direction of the holy synod of the episcopal fathers, and anger God, and through jealousy and strife they make the leaders disorderly and unspiritual.

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[1] The antecedent is not discernible. Perhaps should read "we commanded".

[2] Cp. Heb. 1:1.

[3] ܟܗܢܬܐ for ܟܗܢܠܐ.

[4] Lit., "the covenant."

[5] ܐܬܬܣܝܡ for ܐܬܣܝܡ.

[6] ܫܢܢܐ.

[7] For ܫܩܝܐ.

[8] For ܒܥܠܕܒܒ̈ܐ. The subsequent verbs which have this for their antecedent are singular.

[9] ܢܬܡܚܐ for ܢܡܚܐ. The passive would make a correspondence with the subsequent parallel clause.

"Through the blessed Mar 'Isḥaq, who governed the episcopate in Seleucia-Ctesiphon at that time, and the faithful Maruta the bishop, a few corrections were made in the churches of Christ. However, because they were not acquainted with the laws in their totality, in the fullness of the holy synod and in (its) accurate transmission, (and) especially because (these things) were not set forth in the canons of the episcopal fathers, they wrote those things which were necessarily requisite in a document at that time. When the greater part of our brother bishops (who) had been present had departed from the world, and these things had not (yet) been established, there was no perfect remedy for the previous disease. for ignorance had increased, and divisions and schisms have taken place in one place or another to this day, as it were from the old leaven of ignorance, because of the insolent, proud, ungrateful, and those who do not know reconciliation.

"Hence all of us bishops who, according to the will of our worshipful God, of Christ our Hope, and of the Holy Spirit our Expectation, have gathered from various places {40} to Seleucia and Ctesiphon with the fellow-ministers of our people, to our father, the honorable Mar Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos and head of the bishops in the East, and to his brother, the honorable Mar Acacius, the bishop and envoy, together, in one divine love, in one true faith, and with one perfect hope, request of your excellency that these laws which were established by the illustrious fathers and blessed bishops in the catholic church of the entire dominion of the Romans, and up to now have been carefully and diligently kept there, be given to each one of us by your excellency, our honorable father, and the head and leader of us and of all our brothers, the bishops who are in the whole realm of the illustrious, valiant, and peace-loving Yazdgard, the King of Kings. By the hand of your excellency may we receive the perfect tradition of the laws of our fathers, that we might keep them diligently and meditate upon them day and night, and that they might become guides and enlighteners of us and our council. And for the kindness of your committing (them), all we ourselves — we and all who rise up in our positions after us and occupy our sees — will give thanks before the worshipful God for your undertaking. We have planted our feet in the correct way and tradition through your diligence. By the direction of your word we have discovered the protective commandments and redemptive laws of our illustrious fathers and blessed bishops. As we stand in the one true faith of the fathers, the bishops, which was handed down from the illustrious apostles, so too, we will together be led by the laws which their perfection established at various times so that there will be utterly nothing in the least matter different between us and them. As we all in one body are Christ, so too in the administration of the church we will agree in the one perfection of their divine and complete love and perfect order. Should one of us, with a haughty mind which does not draw near the worshipful God, venture to transgress against these laws, which the episcopal fathers have established, we shall cause him to be bound and anathematized before God and his Christ and his Holy Spirit for ever, as well as those who agree with his evil intention."

Then our honorable father, Mar Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos of the East, in the riches of his wisdom and the greatness of his enlightened understanding, opened his mouth in the presence of his brother, the honorable Mar Acacius the bishop envoy, and said (to the bishops), "Now, then, since you have this just and helpful intention, I am first of all prepared to fulfill in practice these things, and you too, according to your intention and the good will of your promises, must fulfill (them). Our worshipful God, who wills the assistance of all men, is also concerned about the stability and order of his church, that the shepherds of his flocks conduct themselves in holiness, chastity, and watchfulness, and that the members of his holy ministry {41} be resplendent, and the chaste clergy be preserved, and that laymen escape from the snares and traps of the Evil One. The spirits of the illustrious and blessed fathers who are worthy of a good memorial, the bishops ...... that they might be restorers of order in the churches of Christ by their chaste laws, and that every land might taste of the leaven of their steadfast teaching and be confirmed in the balances of their faith which they received from the holy apostles. For the savory salt of their true tradition has come as far as unto us.

"As lovers of truth, discerners of what is fit, and proclaimers of the truth of the glorious Trinity, you have submitted your requests in writings. You have made known by this that because of the confusion which ignorance has multiplied in our churches we should give to your kindness the laws which the holy synod has established from time to time in all the West for the sake of the stability of the churches. The good intention of your agreement has been acceptable before us, for you have asked these things from us like (men who are) orderly, rational, chaste, holy, and honorable in manners. And since you have promised with a steadfast word to keep the laws, and have indicated to us that whoever transgresses against them shall be bound and anathematized, and since we too have so desired from the time that, with the help of God, we have occupied this office, we give to each one of you today the orderly canons which were established by the episcopal fathers of the West, which things you, having gathered to us in divine love, have requested in your writings with mutual agreement, that they may be kept by you with watchfulness. Let no one venture to transgress against any of them. What is more, we also agree to them with all our soul, and will be assiduous in keeping them with you and like you. And we determine binding and anathema upon those who transgress against these steadfast laws, that in all ways the wiles of the Evil One might be brought to an end, his snares broken[1], his nets cut, and every high thing which is lifted up against the knowledge of God might be brought low.

"What the laws are which were established by the fathers in the holy synod your kindness will be able to recognize in such things as are set down in this writing. All of those previous things which were written in an edict in the eleventh year of the reign of the victorious King of Kings, during the primacy of Mar 'Isḥaq the bishop, were written according to times and manners, according to the controversies of the time, and according to the laws of rulers. Since there was much confusion and there was disorderly tumult in various regions, fearful laws were established[2] according to the time for the restraint of the headstrong. They should be kept and not blotted out, that they may be a terror to others, and that no one may venture again to be occupied in the previous tumult."

Then the honorable and illustrious Mar Acacius, the bishop and ambassador, along with {42} all of us bishops, said, "Even so they ought to be kept, and those previous writings should not be forgotten, for they have been established to this day to be for the discipline and terror of those who cause damage in a disorderly way and are prone to go beyond amildlimitation."

We bishops who are here in the presence of our honorable father, Mar Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos of the East, and in the presence of our honorable brother, Mar Acacius, the bishop envoy, have written down and ratified these things with our seals and signatures, which we have written willingly and in one accord. Each one of us has acquired this book of canons, that by them we may be properly guided, and if any of us or those who come after us becomes divided against these things, he shall be estranged from the ministry of Christ.

I, Yahbalaha, bishop catholicos of the East, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Acacius the bishop, have ratified all that is written above.

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[1] ܢܬܬܒܪܘܢ for ܐܬܬܒܪܘܢ

[2] ܐܬܬܣܡܘ for ܐܬܬܣܝܡܘ.

I, 'Agapeṭa, bishop of Beit Lapaṭ, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Hoša‘, bishop of Nisibis, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Ṣaumi, bishop of Karka, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Theodore the bishop, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Doqa, bishop of Šuš, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Gora, bishop of Šoštera, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Šaṭman the bishop, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Garyan the bishop, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Baršma the bishop, have ratified all that is written above.
I, Narsai the bishop, have ratified all that is written above.

The Synod of Yahbalaha is ended.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR DADIŠO‘ 424 AD)

{43} Again, the Synod of Dadišo‘

The gathering of metropolitans and bishops which took place at Markabta of the Arabs in the days of Bahram, the King of Kings, when Mar Dadišo‘ the catholicos desired to resign from the administration of the catholicate.

(This synod took place) in the fourth year of Bahram, the King of Kings, when the bishops were assembled at Markabta of the Arabs before Mar Dadišo‘, the catholicos, the head and chief of the bishops, and leader of all Christianity in the East: 'Agapeṭa, bishop of Beit Lapaṭ, Hoša‘, bishop of Nisibis, Zabda, bishop of Prat, Daniyel, bishop of 'Arbil, ‘Aqbalaha, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, Yazdad, bishop of Rew-'Ardašir, Milis, bishop of Qardo, ‘Abdišo‘, bishop of Šoštera, Daniyel, bishop of 'Arzon, Šem‘on, bishop of Ḥirta of the Arabs, 'Abraham, bishop of Rima, Yoḥanan, bishop of Nhargor, Narsa, bishop of Karka, Narsa, bishop of Ra[dan]i[1], Mari, bishop of Kaškar, Baṭa, bishop of Lašom, Yausep, bishop of Ḥarbgelal, Yoḥanan, bishop of 'Austan dArzon, Milis, bishop of Šoštera[2], Baršaba, bishop of Marw, Yazdwi, bishop of Haryo, 'Aprid, bishop of Segistan, Dawid, bishop of 'Abrašahar, Domaṭ, bishop of Šawita[3] dGorgan, Dawid, bishop of Rai, 'Adai, bishop of outer 'Ariwan, Ṣaṣar, bishop of Beit Daraye, 'Aṭiq, bishop of Beit Moksaye, 'Arṭašahar, bishop of Armenia, Qiris, bishop of Dasen, Mara, bishop of Beit Bagaš, 'Aprahaṭ, bishop of Isfahan, 'Ardaq, bishop of Maškna[4] of Qurad, Yazdwi, bishop of 'Isṭahar, Yoḥanan, bishop of Mazon, and Haṭṭa, bishop of the captivity of Bałašpar.

{44} All of these bishops offered a petition to the chief, head, and leader of all the bishops of the East, the venerable of God and holy Mar Dadišo‘ the catholicos. They asked of him that he return to his see and stand at the head of the church of God, ruling and leading the flock of Christ in all the lands of the East, which had been committed to him by Christ in the high priesthood which he had received, as (it had been committed) to the head of the apostles, Peter. "With the agreement and permission of the saints, confessors, chief bishops, and teachers in their deeds, and those who were tested and the martyrs in their sufferings, crowned in witness to their Lord, Christ, this gift of the patriarchate has been given to and confirmed for this blessed see in the cathedral church of Koke, and you, Mar Catholicos, have been entrusted with (it). You have been confirmed in it the father, head, and leader over all Christianity in the East, and it has gone out and has been transmitted from your see to all sees of bishops, not only in this realm, but to those beyond it. Lo, it flows and is transmitted without interruption, and the commands of fearful kings and the scourgings and tortures of mighty rulers have not been able to inhibit its flow."

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[1] Lit., "Rai," but see subsequently "Dawid, bishop of Rai."

[2] But see above on ‘Abdišo‘.

[3] But see below on "Haṭṭa, bishop of the captivity of Blašpar." Here ܫܘ ܝܬܐ might more probably read ܫܒܝܬܐ.

[4] Lit., the "tent".

After these things which were said by us bishops, the illustrious confessor, our father and head, the leader of all the East, then opened his mouth and said to all our council, "The execrable among us do not allow that there should be a leader over them, those who so many times have been excommunicated and removed from the council of our lords and holy fathers, Mar 'Isḥaq and Mar Yahbalaha the catholicoi and the bishops with them, some of whom have departed from this world. And you who are now here in council yourselves know the wickedness of these execrable men: Baṭi of Hormizd-'Ardašir, Baršabta of Šuš, Zabida of Zabe, Qaisa of Qona, Šarbil of Dasqarta dMalka, 'Abnir of Kaškar, Šlemon of Nuhadra, Bar Ḥaile of Taḥal, Bar Yakwi of Balašpar, Parbokt, who is from 'Ardašir-Koreh, and Yazidbozid of Darbgarad, along with the rest of their colleagues. You yourselves know them, that after they were excommunicated and removed and were stripped of every title of the priesthood, and were also alienated by decree from the Holy Mysteries, they went and sought refuge among outsiders who were rulers. The insolent like them also associated with them, some of whom had been suspended, and some excommunicated by us. They troubled the minds of faithful men and led them astray, saying, 'We who are innocent have been excommunicated and have been removed from the title of the priesthood, but this has been wrongfully done to us by Mar 'Isḥaq, and Mar Yahbalaha, {45} and the bishops with them. Because we ourselves know that we are not guilty, we have not accepted the excommunication and removal which they brought into being against us, nor the bonds which they placed upon us that we might not approach the Mysteries or communicate with Christians.'

"Because of their wickedness I composed and sent to their dioceses writs of judgment against them. When they saw the writs they said, 'We do not accept the judgment of Dadišo', for he did not receive[1] the catholicate; but a certain man who called himself a bishop consecrated him and irregularly titled him "catholicos".' They further said, 'In writing he certified to the Magians, "I am not the head of the Christians, and I do not make bishops, presbyters, and deacons." Also he affirmed that he venerated fire and water. He has forsaken all observances of Christianity, wallowing in much fornication and enriching himself with much money through usury. The churches and monasteries are despoiled by him, and he performs ordination for a large bribe. He cheats many men by the bribes[2] which he takes and the unjust judgments which he makes. He is a man who is false in all his ways. Since temporal instruction has not come near him and he does not know how to read books, he is stupid and ignorant, and this persecution which is happening to Christians at this time is due to his own incitement.' They said these things to Christians, and many were indiscriminately carried away after them. Those who were hearers, even more than those who were communicators and conveyers of these evils, were assiduous to proclaim them to their brothers and to cause them to stumble on our account — not as though they had heard them from the excommunicated, but as though they themselves were witnesses of us in these evil things they repeated concerning us.

"They even spoke evil words and harsh accusations about us to pagans and rulers in the first year, delivering me to bonds and to bitter scourgings. And because the greater part of Christians were scandalized through me at the instigation of the excommunicated, there was no comforter for me in the sicknesses and pains which came upon me due to the severity of the scourgings and the afflictions of the harsh bonds. For this reason persecutions have taken place and the Magians have gained the ascendancy through the destruction of churches and monasteries. Many have apostatized and left our brotherhood, and a few have born witness (as martyrs), but many have fled and hidden themselves.

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[1] ܩܒܠ for ܩܒܠܗ.

[2] ܫܘܚܕ̈ܐ for ܫܘܚܕܐ.

"Even now the excommunicated take delight in the destruction of Christianity that they may establish their own evil will, for they do not credit the edict which justly went out against them from the Spirit, the Paraclete, through the chief shepherds of the church. Thus their wickedness has been strengthened, for it pleases them to continue in the trackless waste of sin. Wishing their pathways to be {46} always free for destruction, they are not willing to have a head or leader to restrain them from the course of the pathways of their wickedness. How I have been allowed to escape, like a bird from the snare of the fowler, through the intervention of a faithful emissary, all of you know. Why do you now tax my wretched soul, which has been wearied without measure by the multitude of troubles which have befallen it? Because of your small 'honor' I have endured great disgrace and measureless affliction. Leave me to weep bitterly over the ruin of the church and over the fall and destruction of her children."

He said these things while his eyes overflowed with tears and he wept in sadness, and he caused all the bishops to weep.

Then 'Agapeṭa the bishop stood up and petitioned the chief and head of the bishops, the leader of all the East, to allow him to speak in his presence and also to read the letters of command which were sent from time to time from the leaders of the West to our early fathers, and finally, those which were in the days of Mar 'Isḥaq and Mar Yahbalaha the catholicoi. Mar Dadišo' the catholicos gave permission to 'Agapeṭa the bishop, and he read the letters.

Then he began to speak in sequence about the previous disorders from which persecution had sprung up against the churches — especially by way of the insolent and disobedient bishops upon whom mighty censure had come from the holy and illustrious high priest, the faithful Mar Papa the catholicos, because of their disgraceful conduct at the time when they went to Mar Milis and to the excellent bishops like him and troubled their mind. On account of their simplicity these men[1] were carried away unawares in vain zeal after them. Some of those who were headstrong became accusers and some of them witnesses, and Mar Milis and the excellent like him received the testimonies of the insolent as judges, and though they had no authority as judges, they rendered Mar Papa null and void. Also, when Mar Papa saw that justice had deserted the council — that injustice prospered among the excellent as well as the unjust and that truth had departed from the headstrong and elect alike — seeing the Gospel placed in the midst while there was no just judgment between him and the council, he became enraged with a great passion. He struck the Gospel, and said to it, "Speak! Speak, Gospel!", as if (to say), "Why are you placed as judge in the midst and have observed truth departing from honest and corrupt bishops alike, but you are silent, not giving a just judgment?" But because he did not approach the Gospel with fear and prudence and did not place his hand upon it as a man seeking refuge, {47} Mar Papa immediately received the affliction of judgment in his body. Then the bishops even more believed all the charges and accusations of injustice, oppression, and perfidy which the insolent bishops had written against Mar Papa, against whom, like a man who is (truly) an evil-doer, they composed a narrative in many copies[2] and rushed it off to many places.

Subsequently, when this was reported to our western fathers, and through exact inquiry the fraud of the insolent was revealed, their wickedness exposed, and they were excommunicated, and all those headstrong bishops had been removed from the titles of their ranks, both those who made accusation and those who bore witness, they forgave[3] the excellent bishops who were in the council which was conducted against Mar Papa, for some of them had (already) departed from the world with a good testimony, and others had left this life with a virtuous name. (They forgave) as well such as were (still) living, not because of their mode of life, but also because it was known that they were very rustic and simple, and for this reason those who were corrupt had all the more been enabled to lead them astray, in order that those insolent men might be enabled to perfect the intention of their wickedness on a man, the patriarch, by (identifying themselves with) the excellent reputation of those blessed ones. The fear they had — that perhaps he would dismiss them from their ranks — came upon them from our western fathers, for they were excommunicated, removed, and cast out without mercy. The (western) fathers loosed and annulled what had been done against Mar Papa, and because of his glorious manners and his glowing zeal in the fear of God — for more than all who preceded him he had conducted himself diligently, and in return he was avenged upon the council which his disciples had convoked against him though they had no authority — the fathers commanded: "Mar Papa shall be proclaimed at the head of all in the 'Book of the Living,' and all who preceded him shall be proclaimed after him. Also, Mar Šem'on, who was placed in Mar Papa's stead at the time of the corruption of rulership, shall become archdeacon to Mar Papa, for we know that he is an excellent and godly man and was carried away to this thing by force in the council. He shall serve before him in love and the fear of God. And when Mar Papa goes to his Lord in his passage from this world, Mar Šem'on will be permitted by us to occupy the see of Mar Papa and to hold the patriarchal leadership.

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[1] I.e., Mar Milis and the excellent bishops.

[2] ܢܣ̈ܚܐ for ܒܢܣ̈ܚܐ

[3] ܫܒܩܘ for ܫܦܩܘ.

"Hereafter, as it is with us[1], disciples shall not be allowed to exalt themselves over their teacher or to become his judges, for permission has not been given them by Christ their Lord. According to the just laws which God the Creator established in human nature, children are not allowed to deprive their fathers of their property, but fathers have the rule over children; nor may servants deprive their masters of their freedom, but masters have the rule over servants. Wives are not {48} allowed to deprive their husbands of headship over them, but wives should be subject to husbands, and husbands should bear rule over their wives, since wives are commanded to love, be subject to, and obey their husbands, but husbands are only commanded to love their wives, not to be subject to them. Wherever men have inclined to the obedience of their wives they have brought punishment upon themselves, for they do not observe the limitations and laws which God has established in nature.

"In the holy church all perfection ought to be especially fulfilled, for as the Father of truth is one, and his Son, Christ the Savior, is one, and his living Spirit, the Paraclete, is one, so his faithful steward, Simon bar Jonah, who was surnamed 'Kepa', is one, whom he promised, 'Upon this rock I will build my church,' and again, 'To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'[2] It was not said by Christ to all the disciples, 'Upon you I will build' and 'I will give you', and although the gift of priesthood was bestowed upon all the apostles, yet one headship, which is a spiritual fatherhood, was not for all. Instead, as it is with one true God, (so it is) with one faithful steward, who should be head, leader, and administrator of his brothers. These laws and limitations are observed in the church with us.

"If there is one of the bishops who thinks that violence has been done to him by his ruler, let him tell of the violence which was done to him in his presence, in the council which takes place before him once a year, like a submissive disciple. If it also appears to all the bishops that violence has been done, let them offer a petition on behalf of their brother, like children to their father, that he treat his son without compulsion, for this is the reason they decreed that there should be councils each year for the resolution of difficulties which arise among us. Hereafter in the region of the East too, at the patriarchal see which is established at the city of Seleucia in the cathedral of Koke, the bishops are also not allowed to act against their head and chief, for they have no authority to become judges over him; and they should know that they have no authority to stretch out the hand to anything not given them by God or by men."

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[1] I.e., with the western fathers.

[2] Mt. 16:18-19.

These things were established by our fathers of old in the West and were sent in writings to our fathers of old in the East, their writings being properly confirmed by (the authority of) the "Word of God", and invoking the curse of the laws upon those who transgress them.

Also, in the days of Mar 'Isḥaq the catholicos — who was a godly man and worked mighty miracles and wondrous signs, through whom the primacy of the high priesthood, which had ceased for twenty-two years, was re-established over the Christian people, and who, through the great freedom of speech which God had given him with the king, raised up the horn of the church by the restoration of the primacy — troublesome men {49} and agitators, (who had become) corrupt in their evil deeds, who at the time were called bishops, ventured to raise up a faction against Mar 'Isḥaq the catholicos. They wrote chapters of censures and powerful accusations against him, scandalizing the simple and troubling the minds of the childlike. They complained against him to the king as well, sending unjust reports to the king that, if possible, they might trouble his mind and he might cast Mar 'Isḥaq into prison.

This too was reported to the fathers in the West, and with letters, and with their agreement, and with the command of the Christian kingdom as well, Mar Maruta the bishop was sent to Yazdgard, the King of Kings, and he came and appeared before him with the great honoraria which he brought with him. Then, by the command of Yazdgard, the King of Kings, a council of bishops took place, and Mar Maruta, through diligent examination, shut up the insolent under judgment and re-arranged all those things which had been brought into confusion through the disobedient bishops.

Again, in the days of Mar Yahbalaha the catholicos the same things were done by the insolent and proud, when, with the help of notable Christian men and with the protection of outsiders, they usurped for themselves the rank of the episcopate. Because of their dishonorable deeds and the vain opinion which they held about themselves they were not persuaded to be subject to the primacy of Mar Yahbalaha, and they troubled and scandalized many, bringing about schisms and divisions in the church.

Through an ambassador of peace these things were made known to our western fathers and they presented this matter to their kingdom, and on their behalf, and with their agreement, they sent a diligent person who was worthy of this mission[1]. He was trustworthy in the rulings he established and in the judgment which he carried out against the insolent, and in the great tranquillity which he effected in the days of Mar Yahbalaha the catholicos.

"You[2] yourselves know, our fathers, that every time there was schism and strife among us the western fathers were supports and stays to this fatherhood, to which all of us disciples and children are bound and affixed as members of an entire body to the head, the king of the members. They have also saved and delivered us (from) the persecutions which rose up against the fathers and us because of the Magians, through an ambassador they have sent to us from time to time.

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[1] ܬܫܕܪܘܬܐ for ܬܫܬܕܪܘܬܐ.

[2] Although the foregoing has been either a summation of 'Agapeṭa's speech or a direct quote from him, there is nowhere in the text where the quotation obviously begins. I insert quotation marks at this point because of the employment of direct address.

"Now, in the same way, persecution and affliction has become grievous against us, and the era does not permit them to take care of us as before. But we, as beloved sons and diligent heirs, are ourselves obliged to take pains to support and help one another through the primacy which is over us. For if, God forbid, we fall from the height of the headship, we (shall) perish without mercy.

"Come, let us repair the breaches of our people and of our clergy, and let us give ourselves up to all (sorts of) deaths for the sake of our father and head. He is our leader {50} and caretaker, the giver of all the stores of the divine treasure, Mar Dadišo' the catholicos, who is Peter for us, the head of our ecclesiastical council. Let us petition and supplicate whether it may be that our father will condescend to receive our petition. If not, let us all stand before his door with lamentation and sadness, in sackcloth and ashes, with weeping and great imploring, until the mercies of our father are stirred for us and he accepts our petition, returning to his paternal see and taking hold of his leadership over us according to the command of Christ to the head of the apostles, Peter."

After these things which 'Agapeṭa the bishop spoke, Hoša', bishop of Nisibis, rose up and said, "Brothers and members, why are you silent and (remaining) seated like those execrable and unprofitable men, that they may (continue to) engage in injuries and harm to the church for the sake of their own satisfaction and honor, engendering destruction for all Christian people through the accusations and oppression of outsiders, and insults, abuse[1], and perversions of minds, by insinuating themselves into the houses of faithful men and women? How much more ought we to be anxious to do what we are able for the help of all of us, and for the support of the primacy of our father and head, Mar Dadišo' the catholicos, and for the tranquillity and peace of the church, and the edifice of her children, which has been cast down among the exalted foundations of her framework because of the tumults, schisms, and scandal which the excommunicated, defrocked, and annulled have brought upon them — those who in their pride are always destroyers of the edifice of piety. Come then, let us leave that which is far off and tend to that which is nearby, for sitting before his door is a remote distance from grasping his holy feet with our hands."

Then all the bishops rose upon their feet, fell upon their faces, and grasped the feet of the catholicos. They held them firmly and raised their voice in weeping, and said, "Pray forgive the offense of your children who have been carried off indiscriminately by the error of the insolent and execrable. Accept favorably this council of your children, and have pity upon the sheep of the flock of your Lord, for the sake of which you gave yourself up a long time to harsh bonds, torments, and bitter afflictions, and on behalf of which and because of which you underwent the peril of various contests. Do not turn your face from it at this time and leave it in the hand of the ravenous wolves, the excommunicated and annulled, but pour out mercy upon all the flocks of your sheep. Let the retribution of harsh judgment be reserved for the execrable alone, and let them be cast out without mercy — not only from the title of the priesthood, but from the title and chaste religious garb. Let them be rejected like pagans from all concord and unity with Christians. {51} Let their excommunication, dismissal, and annulment be proclaimed in all the churches of Christ. If they show penance, when it pleases your fatherhood let them be received as laymen, and grant them participation in the Mysteries with the faithful laymen.

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[1] ܓܘܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ for ܓܘܪ̈ܝܬܐ.

"We have confirmed — and (now) confirm — the divine commands and paternal laws which have been sent from time to time to this region of the East in which we live. They decreed that 'His children may not deprive one who is a father of his property, and one who is a head or director may not be subjected to accusation by those who are lower than he, and no one who is lower than he may have authority over him who rules over all'. Our western fathers decreed that 'Henceforth bishops are not allowed to make a council against their head, nor to write a bill of accusation or complaint. Instead, if there is violence done to them and they do not receive relief in a council before him, let them make an appeal before his fellow patriarchs, that by their examination there might be a determination between him and them.' But since this has been tried so many times — for those who have appealed against the catholicoi have always been found in the wrong and have received the punishment of their offense by excommunication and deposition, having been defrocked and stripped of the title of their ranks and of the wearing of their raiment — we now determine by the 'Word of God' that easterners are not allowed to make an appeal — even before the western patriarchs — against their patriarch. Instead, every contention which is unresolved before him shall be reserved to the presence of the judgment seat of Christ. And we have determined and confirmed this statute, which is indissoluble and irrevocable, for we have sealed it with the Holy Trinity: by the 'Word of the Trinity' no one is allowed to convene a council against the catholicos or cause disputes, schisms, or divisions, or to write bills of accusation and complaint against him as they did against those of old, or to send copies of written summaries to the dioceses as they sent out against Mar Papa, or to insinuate himself into houses for his wicked tale-bearing. For no reason should anyone think or say that the catholicos of the East may be judged by those who are under him, or by a patriarch like himself; but he shall render judgment upon all who are under him, and his judgment shall be reserved to Christ, who chose him, raised (him) up and placed him at the head of his church, for so it pleased his eternal Lordship that his own all-governing Lordship should be entrusted to and honored in the primacy of his church.

"Henceforth, anyone who is beneath the catholicos is a disciple and subject, and is debtor and liable to the catholicos. He shall cheerfully agree to every judgment which issues from him. All of us bishops and all {52} who come after us confirm while afar and approve while nearby everything which your fatherhood does, as well as all the fathers who come after you and hold your see."

And the bishops added, saying, "As the Lord lives and as your soul lives, our father, we will not loose our hands from your feet or rise from the earth until you answer (with) 'peace' to this our council and to the entire church."

Our holy father, Mar Dadišo' the catholicos, again opened his mouth and said, "I beg you, do not add grief upon grief to me in that you have fallen upon your faces on the earth. Rise up on your feet, for I (shall) do as you have asked. Aside from those who have been excommunicated and have ceased from the title of their priesthood because of their unpardonable lawlessness — those who were first and those later ones who (joined) with them, upon whom your holiness has also passed sentence — we loose and forgive the rest who were carried off in ignorance and foolish zeal, and we remove from our mind any disagreements which existed between us and them. We pardon them through your prayers and through the grace of the Spirit, the merciful and absolving Advocate of his church for ever."

And the bishops said, "Amen."

When the bishops rose they again said, "These things which we have decreed with your agreement, our father, if in our days or after us anyone ventures to transgress against any of them, he shall be cast out without mercy and alienated from every title of the priesthood as the execrable of old and those later in our days have been cast out and removed. If there is anyone who for whatever reason intercedes on their behalf, they shall make known to him what injuries, damages, persecutions, and afflictions took place in the church because of the insolent, haughty, and proud who rose up against the primacy. If after these things he who intercedes (on their behalf) is not persuaded, he too, like them, shall be cast out without mercy from every title of priesthood. Neither we, nor those who come after us, have authority — by the living Word of the Trinity — to loose or annul these things which we decree, confirm, and sign in this book."

These are the bishops whose names are written above in the rolls which they composed and sealed above and signed below — except for the bishops who came after us and ratified and agreed to whatever the earlier ones had done, and except for the other bishops who were assigned the judgment of Mar Dadišo‘ {53} the catholicos in the council. They[1] came, sealed, and signed at the end of all the writings, or their names[2] are designated within the writings.

The Synod of Mar Dadišo‘ the catholicos is ended.

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[1] I.e., the bishops who came later.

[2] I.e., the bishops who were censured by the Patriarch.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR 'AQAQ

486 AD)

Again, the synod of Mar 'Aqaq[1] the catholicos, who was catholicos of Beit Lapaṭ, Nisibis, Prat dMaišan, 'Arbil, Beit Garmai, Fars, Kaškar, and of Promizdmarod[2].

Gabril of Haryo, Mihrnarsa of Zabe, Yazdgard of Beit Daraye, Šem'on of Ḥirta, Muše of Piroz-Šabur, Daniyel of Karme, Noḥ of Balašpar, Bagiš of Rima, 'Eliya of Nhargor, Muše of Armenia, 'Abraham of Taḥal, Baṭi of Hormizd-'Ardašir, Posai of Šoštere, Mina[3] of Lašom, Papa of Maḥoza dAriwan, Muše of Ḥmir, 'Abraham of Beit Madaye, Kozid[4] of Ḥarbgelal.

In the month of 'Ilol[5], in the second year of the pacific and gentle Balaš[6] the King of Kings, by the will of divine grace we gathered to this place: 'Aqaq the bishop catholicos of the East, Papa, bishop of Beit Lapaṭ, Bar Ṣauma, bishop of Nisibis, Yoḥanan, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, and our brothers, the other bishops who came from the provinces of Beit Aramaye, Beit Huzaye, Nisibis, Ḥdayab, and Beit Garmai, and Ma'na, bishop of Rew-'Ardašir.

According to the will of God, we approved, in mutual love, whatever was done at Beit Lapaṭ[7] in this council at the time we came to peace and unity, according to the teaching of our Lord. We made an agreement among ourselves: "Insofar as God permits us, and we bishops of various places come together and confirm in writing, with our signatures and seals, after investigation and (with) the unity of us all, the ecclesiastical canons, definitions, and admonitions which the holy fathers and bishops of old made, as well as such as are now (made) — since the dishonest have multiplied in our flocks, disturbing by their appearances the steadfast orders of the church {54} and corrupting the true, apostolic, and orderly faith — we shall all, each in his own city, in the diocese of his administration, teach, instruct (with), and correct (according to) the true faith and the trustworthy manners appropriate to it."

First Canon: In the month of Šbaṭ, in the same second year, when we were in Beit Aramaye and gathered as one in the city of Seleucia — I, 'Aqaq, bishop catholicos, as well as the excellent men, Yoḥanan, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, 'Abišo', bishop of Kaškar, Paula, bishop of Karka dLedan, Gabril, bishop of Haryo, Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, Yazdgard, bishop of Beit Daraye, Šem'on, bishop of Ḥirta, Muše, bishop of Piroz-Šabur, Daniyel, bishop of Karme, Noḥ, bishop of Balašpar, Bagiš, bishop of Rima, 'Eliya, bishop of Nhargor — it was reported before us that there are men who are corrupt of mind in this land of Beit Aramaye, who are clothed in the garb of mourning, and though they are far from the real meaning of this garb, they go about in many places, corrupting simple minds and doing harm to the true confession of faith of the catholic and apostolic church. While they are sick with the doctrine of heretics, and the filth of every heresy inheres in them, they teach against the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and revile the preachers and teachers of the fear of God. In the intensity of their blasphemies concerning the dispensation of our Lord and the preaching of the apostles, they draw upon themselves the name and reputation of those concerning whom the Holy Spirit spoke through the blessed Paul: "In the last times some will depart from the faith and follow after deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons. By false appearance they will deceive and teach falsehood, being seared in their conscience. They will forbid marriage and withdraw from foods which God created for the use — with thanksgiving — of those who believe and know the truth."[1]

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[1] Ruled 485-496.

[2] For ܦܪܘܡܝܙܕܡܪܘܕ. On the list of signatories at the end of this synod is "Paromai, bishop of the city of Marw".

[3] This name is given as "Mika" in the list of bishops at the end.

[4] This name is given as "Kodnaz" in the list of bishops at the end.

[5] From the new moon in September to that in October.

[6] Reigned 484-488.

[7] This acceptance of everything done at Bet Lapaṭ is contradicted by the appended renunciation of everything done at Bet Lapaṭ. See comments on "Synod of Bar Ṣauma" below. Perhaps the word ܡܥܠܝܢ should read ܒܛܠܝܢ.

With the advice and counsel of the community, we agreed that we should set forth in this document that which accords with the compact which we reached and the statute which we established at Ḥdayab for the settlement of the faith and concerning right conduct and manners, teaching and admonishing the entire community of believers that, according to the teaching which is through the apostles, and according to the doctrine which is handed down through the fathers and continues in the church of Christ, the faith of us all should be in one confession of one divine nature, which is in three complete qnome of one true and eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by which heathenism is overcome and Judaism is judged.

{55} But our faith in the dispensation of Christ should also be in a confession of two natures of divinity and humanity, none of us venturing to introduce mixture, commingling, or confusion into the distinctions of those two natures. Instead, while divinity remains and is preserved in that which belongs to it, and humanity in that which belongs to it, we combine the copies[2] of the natures in one Lordship and one worship because of the perfect and inseparable conjunction[3] which the divinity had with the humanity. If anyone thinks or teaches others that suffering and change belong to the Godhead of our Lord, not preserving — in regard to the union of the parṣopa of our Savior — the confession of perfect God and perfect man, the same shall be anathema.

Second Canon: Concerning the dishonest men about whom we made mention above, who clothe themselves with black garments for a false appearance and for a sign of deception, misleading the simple, and with the appearance of holiness, abstinence, self-denial, and asceticism — those things by which the ancients conducted themselves in a wilderness which was uncultivated, making their dwelling-place far from the society of men and the habitation of towns and villages, serving and pleasing God — we command thus: if they are truly disciples and children of those blessed men and follow them in dress and manners, let their way of life be, like those (of old), in places suitable to their dress: they are not permitted to enter in order to live in towns or villages which have in them priests, bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and become a cause of strife or produce tumult between priests and their flocks or (between) teachers and their disciples. They may not form a congregation in them[4], offer oblations in them, or give baptism, or corrupt the orders of the church as they have done hitherto. Instead, let them go to monasteries and to places which are far from cultivated land, and let their dwelling-place and their way of life be in those (places), while they follow and obey the bishops, presbyters, and visitors[1] who govern and have authority over their monasteries and the places in which they dwell. But if, following this permission and the limitation by which they have been prohibited from dwelling in towns and villages which have priests in them, they should again enter to live in towns, or they are discovered to be building habitations within villages and offering in them oblations, or gathering people outside of the church, or administering baptism — except within monasteries and the places named above — they (shall be) bound and anathematized from the ministry of the priesthood and from contact with Christians. Henceforth, any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any faithful layman {56} who receives them and assists them to do any of those things which have been prohibited — (whether) in his town, or on his estate, or in his house — and to make tumult in the church, shall be bound and anathematized — from his ministry if he is a priest, and from the church and participation in the Sacrament if he is a layman.

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[1] 1 Tim. 4:1-3.

[2] For ܦܪ̈ܫܓܢܝܗܘܢ.

[3] ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ.

[4] I.e., in towns and villages.

Third Canon: Concerning the ways which are appropriate to the truth and agreeable with faith in Christ, let this definition serve for us: from now on no bishop may employ coercion or compulsion in regard to a prohibition of marriage in the diocese which he governs or in the church which he serves. There is enough evil which to this day is reported concerning our flocks through adultery and fornication, and their[2] iniquity has been spread abroad and has reached the hearing of outsiders, arousing reproach and scorn toward us in the consciousness of all peoples.

None of us may forcefully impose this promise on his clergy, or on priests of the villages, or on the religious[3] under his authority. Instead, his teaching on this matter should be like the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. From his own weakness let him understand the weakness of others. For our Lord Christ answered the apostles, when they asked him whether their separation from marriage was useful for them, saying, "Not everyone is capable of this saying."[4] Shortly afterwards he left the matter up to the will of the apostles, saying, "Let anyone who happens to be capable receive (it)."[5]

The blessed apostle taught the Corinthians in accord with the teaching of our Savior when they had written him to inform them whether it was right for them to be hindered from marriage, saying, "Concerning the things which you wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman; but because of fornication, one should retain his wife and a woman should retain her husband."[6] In another place, when the apostle considered human weakness and the difficulty of the matter, he gave his teaching to those who, by their own choice, had offered this promise, saying, "But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is better for them if they remain like me. But if they cannot endure, let them marry, for it is better to take a wife than to burn with lust."[7]

Thus we too, each and every one of us, if now we have understood the harm which the laxity of those without self-control — who have scandalized the conscience of many — has acquired for us and for our flock, should reveal our sicknesses and disclose our sins, not being ashamed of the plain remedy which is offered for the feeble in conduct among us, both by a change in our conduct, and by penance, through the correction we make for ourselves and for our people. In actual practice let us bear witness concerning the saying of the great teacher, "Truly it is better to take a wife than to burn with lust," {57} each one of us choosing for himself one of two things: either to abstain completely or to draw near honestly, relying upon the teaching of the blessed Paul who, concerning the conduct appropriate for the episcopacy, commanded Timothy in his letter, speaking in this manner, "If one desires the episcopate he desires a good work. A bishop, then, ought to be blameless (and) the husband of one wife."[1] It is clear that this teaching applies to every man, for when any one of them is married to one wife, his marriage will be fulfilling the law of the apostle.

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[1] Periodeutai.
[2] The antecedent is "our flocks".
[3] The "bnai qyama."
[4] Mt. 19:11.
[5] Mt. 19:12
[6] 1 Cor. 7:1-2.
[7] 1 Cor. 7:8-9.

Also, in regard to deacons who have already received ordination to the diaconate: it is lawful for each one of them to be joined to one wife in honest and lawful marriage and to flee from the ancient custom which is reproached and reviled by outsiders because of the laxness of the dissolute. The lawful marriage of those who newly draw near for ordination to the diaconate should also be investigated along with the rest of their manners, and when they are honest married men they should receive ordination to the diaconate, that they might thus fulfill the apostolic teaching which says, "Deacons should be husbands of one wife, ruling well their children and their houses."[2]

But hereafter, so that those who are ill among us may be perfectly healed, even though they do not desire it — those who, according to the word of the apostle have cut off their hope and delivered themselves up to lasciviousness and to the service of every defilement in their intemperance, to whom fornication and adultery were pleasing, and who have not honestly married, begotten, and nurtured (children) legally according to the will of God —we also add this to this canon: none of the bishops may henceforth ordain to the diaconate anyone from his town or from the villages under his control unless he first investigates whether he has good manners which are worthy of the ordination which he approaches, and along with these has had a legal marriage (with) the procreation of children, so that all pride and the evidence of errroneous teachings might be diligently eradicated from the church of Christ — those who call marriage and procreation evil while satisfying their lust in adultery, fornication, and evil doings. Let us all, with a strong mind which despises vainglory, with one common consent remove from our flocks all notorious[3] and harmful traditions. Let us place just and upright limitations upon the married and upon the unmarried who are in the dioceses committed to us by divine grace, teaching that one who, by his own choice, elects for himself separation from marriage should remain undistracted in a solitary dwelling, chastely and steadfastly.

{58} One who chooses this for himself, striving to please Christ with chastity and the eschewal of all earthly things, should he be found blameworthy — after this open permission concerning honest marriage and the procreation of children — and adheres to adultery and fornication, let him receive punishment through the censure of the canons. If he has the title of priest, let him be a stranger to the ministry of the priesthood until he shows repentance appropriate to his transgression and appears to be worthy of forgiveness. On the other hand, if it should be that he has applied himself to legal marriage and ventures to be familiar with others outside of intimacy with the one wife, or he who is honestly married should withhold the fruits of marriage — except for the natural infirmity of sterility — the same should also become a stranger to the fellowship of the church and to the rank of the priesthood.

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[1] 1 Tim. 3:1-2. It is of some interest here that the quotation is taken from some other version than the Pšiṭta, which does not have "bishop", but "presbyter".

[2] See 1 Tim. 3:12.

[3] ܡܪ̈ ܫܝܬܐ for ܡܪ̈ܫܝܬܐ.

In the case of a priest who is not yet married, but who desires to be married honestly and to procreate lawfully, or one whose first wife has died, who desires to take for himself a second wife and maintain true intimacy with the latter as with the former, his bishop is not permitted to hinder him from this desire, for honest marriage and the procreation of children, whether it is administered before the priesthood or after the priesthood, is pleasing and acceptable before God. Also, it is reckoned as a marriage with one wife, even if there is a change in (the marriage) by the constraint of death or exigencies which arise in the world, for a brother who applies himself to it, even when he experiences it twice in succession, (having) one (wife) after another.

Therefore we command and teach that these things shall be, so that the choice of holiness rather than marriage with legal intimacy and the procreation of children may be free from force and compulsion. If anyone strives against this true teaching and in his pride considers this inadequate, deciding for himself to practice and teach things that correspond to the false appearance which we have exposed and cast out from among us with the help of Christ; and (if) he is not persuaded to stand in the truth of our faith, which is set down by us in this writing, carrying out in truth one of these two things, either perfect holiness or legal marriage which is adorned with the purity of the procreation of children; and (if) he does not agree to the decision which we have set down above concerning those deceivers who in name are called "weepers", but are far removed from its reality, and does not ratify the agreement of these matters by his seal and signature, with a good will and with a mind in which there is no deceit, (then) if he is a bishop, presbyter, or monk who either teaches against these things or does not assent to whatever is set down above and confirmed in this writing, he (shall) have no fellowship with us, and {59} we will abstain from his contact and interdict the priesthood which he ministers: he is not be permitted to serve in any of the ranks of the church. If he is a layman, he shall be bound and anathematized.

We confirm the truth of all that is written above with our seals and signatures.

I, 'Aqaq, bishop catholicos of the East, assent to whatever is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, Papa, bishop of Beit Lapaṭ, metropolitan of Beit Huzaye, agree to whatever is written above, and have signed and sealed.
I, Ḥai, bishop metropolitan of Prat dMaišan, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, Paromai, bishop of the city of Marw[1], agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, Yoḥanan, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, metropolitan of Beit Garmai, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, Baṭi, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, 'Abišo', bishop of Kaškar, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, Šem'on, bishop of Ḥirta, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, Yazdgard, bishop of Darai, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.
I, Šila, deacon and notary of Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, have been commanded to sign on his behalf in this writing that he affirms and agrees to what is written above and seals (it) with his seal.
I, Narsa, deacon and notary of Bagiš, bishop of Rima, have been commanded by Bagiš to sign on his behalf in this writing that he agrees to all that is written above and seals (it) with his seal.
I, Posai, bishop of Šoštere, agree to these things which are written above and have signed and sealed.

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[1] But see above on "Promizdmarod".

I, Mika, bishop of Lašom, agree to whatever is written above and have signed and sealed.

{60} I, 'Abraham, bishop of Beit Madaye, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Yausep, presbyter and notary of Mar 'Eliya, bishop of Nhargor, have signed in this book — for I have been commanded by him — that he agrees to those things which are written above and seals (them) with his seal.

I, Noḥ, bishop of Balašpar, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, 'Isḥaq, bishop of Karka dMaišan, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, 'Abraham, bishop of Taḥal, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Papa, bishop of 'Ariwan, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, 'Abraham, presbyter of the great church of the 'Aksadnakre[1], have signed in this writing for Mar Yausep, bishop of Rai, for I was commanded by him, who agrees to what is written above and seals (it) with his seal.

I, Muše, bishop of Piroz Šabur, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Daniyel, bishop of Karme, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Kodnaz[2], bishop of Ḥarbgelal, agree to everything which is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, 'Aprahaṭ, bishop of Beit Bagaš, have agreed to these things which are written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Hoša', bishop of Ganzak of Azerbaijan, agree to whatever is written above and have signed and sealed.

The Synod of Mar 'Aqaq is ended.

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[1] A peculiar word, probably a corrupt spelling of "'Aksandakre", possibly denoting a hostel (or hospital) for strangers.

[2] But see list at the beginning for "Kozid".

(THE SYNOD OF BARṢAUMA)

{61} Again, the Synod of Barṣauma[1], Bishop of Nisibis.

The reason we did not enter this[2] in this book along with the synods of the eastern fathers is this:

Barṣauma, while he (yet) lived, came to the village of Beit 'Edrai in the region of Beit Nuhadra to the venerable and holy father of fathers, Mar 'Aqaq the catholicos, and they remained there together for some time in a council of bishops. He showed repentance for everything he had done in the city of Beit Lapaṭ — he and the bishops who were with him — and made an agreement: "There will be a council of bishops in the royal cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and all the metropolitans, along with their bishops, will be assembled. I will come there and nullify everything which was done at the city of Beit Lapaṭ." The God-loving, venerable, and holy Mar 'Aqaq, the catholicos patriarch, accepted Barṣauma after his repentance, and they brought about reconciliation and peace with each other, participating together in the ministry of the priesthood and in the reception of the Holy Mysteries.

Documents were composed by Barṣauma and the bishops with him to the bishops of the province of the patriarchal see, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, which informed them of the loosing and complete annulment which Barṣauma had effected against the synod which was in the region of Huzaye at the city of Beit Lapaṭ. These documents are written down below[3]; their originals, along with their seals, are kept in the archives of the catholicos.

This is the reason this synod [was not entered] among these synods of the fathers, for he, Barṣauma, during his lifetime testified that it was composed with an evil disposition and human passion. Its composition was contrary to the canons of the church, and it brought perversity, contention, and confusion into ecclesiastical administration, and he, as a sagacious man, recognized his transgression and loosed and annulled everything which he did unjustly in Beit Lapaṭ.

Because of this we have written clearly so that any reader who happens upon these writings which we have composed will not complain and say, "Why are all the eastern synods brought together by agreement in one body, and entered with them by agreement (is) the record of the western synods as well, but this one escaped ratification with them all?" Let the reason for this synod be explained to him, that justly it passed from enumeration and ratification among all the ecclesiastical synods.

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[1] Ruled as Metropolitan of Nisibis ?-*c*. 492.

[2] The reference here is to the synod, described subsequently, that Barṣauma called at Bet Lapaṭ which created a schism in the church. It is therefore left out of the record of synods, and this explanation is given.

[3] In the appendix.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR BABAI

498 AD)

{62} Again, the Synod of Mar Babai[1] the Catholicos.

Muše of Piroz Šabur[2], Daniyel of Karme, Yoḥanis of ’Abrašahar, Yoḥanan of Beit Zabdai, Noḥ[3] of Balad, Mari of Rima, Muše of Nhargor, ’Aprahaṭ of Beit Bagaš, Ḥodidad of Ḥarbgelal, Yoḥanan of Ma‘alta, ’Abraham of Lašom, ’Abraham of Taḥal, Marehraḥmeh of Beit Dasen, Yoḥanan of Marw, Šila of Hormizd-’Ardašir, Yazdgard of Šoštera, ’Aprim of Fars, Maron of Prat dMaišan, ’Abraham of Beit Mehrqaye, ’Abraham of Gorgan, Yausep of Rai, Babai of Beit Madaye, ’Ahron of Balašpar, Brikišo‘ of Beit Daraye, Mihrnarsa of Zabe, Paulos of Šharqart, Šlemon[4] of Beit Nuhadra, Šlemon[5] of Karka dLedan, ’Eliya of Ḥirta, ‘Amanuel of Kaškar, Boktišo‘ of Karka dBet Slok, Yausep of Ḥdayab[6], ’Aḥai of Prat, Hoša‘, the metropolitan of Nisibis, Marwai, bishop of Beit Lapaṭ, Babai the catholicos.

In the month of Latter Tešri[7], in the second year of the peaceful and gentle Zamasp[8], the King of Kings, according to the will of God we came to the capital of Beit Aramaye[9] by the command of the King of Kings and with the encouragement of the holy and God-fearing Mar Babai, the bishop catholicos, we bishops of various places whose names [are these: Hoša‘, bishop of Nisibis, metropolitan of the dioceses of ‘Araba, ’Aḥai, bishop of Prat, metropolitan of Maišan, Yausep, bishop of ’Arbil, metropolitan of Ḥdayab, Boktišo‘, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, metropolitan of Beit Garmai, ‘Amanuel, bishop of Karka dLedan, ’Iyob, bishop of ’Arzon, ’Isḥaq, bishop of Karka dMaišan, Šlemon, bishop of Beit Nuhadra, Paulos, bishop of Šharqart, Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, Brikišo‘, bishop of Beit Daraye, Muše, bishop of Piroz-Šabur, ’Ahron, bishop of Balašpar, Babai, bishop of Madai, Yausep, bishop of Rai, ’Abraham, bishop of Gorgan, ’Abraham, bishop of Beit Mehqraye[10] and of Isfahan, Yoḥanis, bishop of Ṭos and of ’Abrašahar, Yoḥanan, bishop of Beit Zabdai, Ḥoḥ, bishop of Balad, Mari, bishop of Rima, Muše, bishop of Nhargor, ’Aprahaṭ, bishop of Beit {63} Bagaš, Kodidad[11], bishop of Ḥarbgelal, Yoḥanan, bishop of Ma‘alta, ’Abraham, bishop of Lašom, and ’Abraham, bishop of Taḥal], with the other bishops who gave their assent to us by their letter, whose names (are): [Daniyel, bishop of Karme,] Yazdad, bishop of Haryo, and Papai, bishop of Šuš.

All of us gathered in good will and love for the honor and greeting of our honored father, Mar Babai the catholicos.

When we arrived at the cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, we came to the meeting with him who is peaceful and gentle in the love of Christ. He too received us in love, according to the good will which he possessed, as brothers and members of this paternal primacy. He revealed to us the imperial letter of the peace-loving and well-disposed Zamasp, the King of Kings, which was sent to him so that the bishops under his authority might gather with him and bring about reform in the matter of honest marriage and the procreation of children for all the religious[1] in various places. And all of us, we whose names are set down above, with one like mind which adheres to the laws of Christ, made corrections which are due among our people and flocks in the matter of marriage and the procreation of children. We gave permission that, from him who is patriarch to him who is lowest in standing, we may retain openly and apply ourselves to pure marriage, with one wife alone, in which there is the procreation of children, agreeing also — only in this! — with the council which took place in the land of Beit Huzaye in the twenty-seventh year of Piroz, the King of Kings, in the city of Beit Lapaṭ, and with the writing which began in the second year of Balash in Beit 'Edrai during the days of Mar 'Aqaq and was concluded in the land of Beit Aramaye, and with the true faith which was established from the sense and teachings of the Holy Scriptures. We have loosed and annulled, by the "Word of Christ" who rules over all, the anathemas and suspensions which have existed from the fourth year of Kavad[2] until the second year of this lord, Zamasp, the King of Kings, which came to pass in ecclesiastical affairs through a human tendency, as a result of (personal) disputes and transgression of decorum, whether they were set forth by the blessed Mar 'Aqaq the catholicos and those with him against the excellent Mar Barṣauma, the bishop of Nisibis and the bishops with him, or whether set forth by Mar Barṣauma and the bishops with him against Mar 'Aqaq the catholicos and the bishops with him. But the suspension of (any) who were appropriately suspended shall also be observed now. However, all the writs and sentences which were composed by both sides in hostility shall be torn up, and no one, by the "Word of Christ", is allowed to retain them in his possession.

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[1] Ruled 497-502.

[2] The list of signatories at the end of this synod has "Yoḥanan the presbyter" signing for "Šma‘", the "bishop of Piroz-Šabur."

[3] In the two following lists the name "Ḥoḥ" appears twice for the bishop of Balad, and the name "Šubḥališo‘" a third time.

[4] In the two lists below this name is given once as "Šlemon" and once as "Šmuel".

[5] In the two lists below this name is given once as "‘Amanuel" and once as "Šmuel".

[6] Yausep is twice listed here as "bishop" of ’Arbil, and Sidora appears also on behalf of the bishop ’Abošṭa.

[7] I.e., November.

[8] Reigned briefly 496-498, interrupting the reign of Kavad I (488-531).

[9] A reference to Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

[10] But see spelling in previous list.

[11] But see spelling in previous list.

{64} We also agree with the upright laws which were set forth synodically by the early fathers, which justly declare the honor and primacy of this apostolic see of the great church of Koke. Henceforth, with one agreement, one perfect mind, and one unfeigned love, we regard our venerable and holy brother, Mar Babai, the bishop catholicos, as head, leader, commander, and ruler, and we assent to all matters which are administered by him in the fear of God. To one who with pride and a swollen and rebellious mind is opposed to this primacy and this holy see of the fathers, or desires to separate himself from the sound body of his brother-bishops in all the East, we will first offer intercession and petition in the manner of Christ. We will plead with him as a member, brother, and fellow-servant not to be alienated from our contact. But if he remains in hostility and, not heeding the petition of his brother-bishops, he has acted to separate himself from fellowship with us, there will also be no fellowship for us with him in anything until he comes to the patriarch and agrees like a disciple to this writing which we have made.

Concerning the council of the bishops which takes place twice a year: the one with the head of their province, according to what was stipulated by those of old, shall indeed be observed and constituted by us. But since it was established by our fathers that there should be a council of metropolitans and all the bishops with the patriarch (once) in two years, it seemed to us that we should do this once in four years, that is, in the month of Prior Tešri[3]. But should a matter come up and it seems to the patriarch that a council is needed because of any matter whatever in the interval of these four years, this should be taken care of by all the bishops with a good will. Should anyone be suffering from sickness, or there is an urgent call which is vexatious beyond his strength, and he who is detained by any of these things does not take refuge in human pretexts, let him send a notable person from his own clergy, furnished by him with writs of agreement. But should he be scornful and does not do any of these things, delaying his coming on false pretexts, the same (shall) be in suspension from his ministry until he comes to the patriarch and agrees to whatever was done in the council.

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[1] ܒܢ̈ܝ ܩܝܡܐ.

[2] I.e., *c.* 492, when 'Aqaq officially excommunicated Bar Ṣauma.

[3] I.e., October.

In regard to the matter of the church in Belapaṭ, and Yazdad, bishop of Rew-'Ardašir and metropolitan of Fars: we learned from Mar Catholicos that he wrote many times urging the clergy of Belapaṭ and Yazdad the bishop to come to the council, but they delayed and did not come. All of us made this decision and left {65} the matter in the hands of Mar Catholicos: if from this month of Tešri in the second year of Zamasp, the King of Kings, until the month of Tešri in the third year of the same King of Kings — the time being one year — Papa[1] comes and assents to the upright faith of the church and signs and seals the writing, or if, should Papa fail to come, he sends by the hands of his representative[2] an agreement in writing which assents to the upright faith of the church and also confirms this writing which has been composed by us, he (will) be regarded by us as a sharer with us in the work of the episcopate which he governs, and the things which have happened up to this time shall pass away. But if he does not act in this way he shall be retained under his anathema, which was decreed upon him by this synod of bishops in Beit Aramaye.

Also, if Yazdad, bishop of Rew-'Ardašir, does not come for the veneration and salutation of our father, Mar Babai the catholicos, during the time which is determined above, and does not in true love and perfect peace agree to everything which has been composed by us in this writing, he (will) be a stranger to our ministry and there (will) be no fellowship for us with him. Anyone who does not return shall be loosed and annulled.

All of us bishops from various places, whose names are inscribed above — who have gathered at this time before the holy head of the bishops, Mar Babai the catholicos, — have composed, signed, and sealed this writing.

We also especially confirm this: every bishop who was chosen properly and by the election of the clergy and all of his city during the time of strife — from the seventh year of Kavad until now — will be accepted by us in love, honor, and the order of the ministry of his episcopate. But one who obtained by stealth and plunder that which is the title of the episcopate — through division and strife and without the election of the clergy and faithful people who are in his city — the same we reject according to the commandment of the ecclesiastical ordinances, and we remove ourselves from fellowship with him.

I, Šila, presbyter and archdeacon of Mar Babai, bishop catholicos of the East, sign this book by the command of Mar Babai the catholicos, who agrees to whatever is written above and seals (it).
I, Posai, deacon from the clergy of the church of Beit Lapaṭ, metropolis of Beit Huzaye, have been commanded by the excellent Mar Marwai[3], bishop metropolitan, and have signed this book for him, for he agrees to everything written above and seals (it).
{66} I, 'Eliya, deacon and notary of Mar Hoša', bishop metropolitan of the land of the Arabites, have been commanded by my lord, our father the bishop, and have signed for him that he agrees with everything written above and seals (it).
I, 'Anpai[1], bishop of Prat, metropolitan of Maišan, have affirmed this writing and have signed and sealed.

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[1] Papa is the bishop of Bet Lapaṭ and a sympathizer with the monophysite party.

[2] ܦܪܨܘܦܐ.

[3] But see above on the still living Mar Papa.

I, Yausep, bishop of 'Arbil, metropolitan of Ḥdayab, agree to whatever is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Mari[2], bishop of Prat, metropolitan of Maišan[3], have affirmed everything written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Hormizd, deacon and notary of Boktišo', bishop of Karka dBet Slok, metropolitan of Beit Garmai, have been commanded by him to sign on his behalf that he agrees to this writing and seals (it).

I, 'Amanuel, bishop of Kaškar, have agreed to whatever is written above and have confirmed with my signature and sealed.

I, 'Eliya, bishop of Ḥirta, have signed this book and have confirmed whatever is written in it, and I have sealed (it).

I, Šmuel, bishop of Karka dLedan, have signed this writing and sealed (it), and I agree to everything written above.

We, 'Abraham, Mari, and Šem'on, presbyters (and) clergy of Mar Šila, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir, have brought a letter from him, for he agrees with this synod which has taken place in a gathering of bishops by Mar Babai, patriarch of the East, in the second year of Zamasp, the King of Kings. We have been commanded by the bishop Mar Šila to sign this writing, so that his agreement may be confirmed.

I, Šmuel, bishop of Beit Nuhadra, have signed, affirmed, and sealed.

I, Yoḥanan of Marw, bishop, have signed this writing, and everything in it is confirmed and sealed.

I, Paulos, bishop of Šharqart, have signed this writing and ratified it with my seal.

I, Šila, presbyter and notary of Mar Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, have been commanded by him to sign for him that he assents to everything written above and seals (it).

I, Marqos, notary of Mar Brik Išo', bishop of Beit Daraye, {67} have been commanded by him to sign on his behalf, for he assents to everything which is written above and seals (it).

I, Babai, bishop of Beit Madaye, have signed this writing, and have assented to whatever is written in it and have sealed (it).

I, 'Aḥai, presbyter and notary, have signed on behalf of Mar 'Ahron, bishop of Balašpar, who agrees to everything which is written above and seals (it).

I, 'Aḥai, presbyter and notary, have signed for Mar Yausep, bishop of Rai, who agrees to everything written above and seals (it).

I, 'Abraham, bishop of Gorgan, have signed this writing and have agreed to everything written above and have sealed (it).

I, 'Abraham, bishop of Beit Mehqraye and of Isfahan, have signed and agreed to everything written above and have sealed (it).

I, Yoḥanis, bishop of Ṭos and of 'Abrašahar, have agreed to what is written above, and I have signed and sealed.

I, Ḥoḥ the notary, have been commanded by 'Aprahaṭ, bishop of Beit Bagaš, and I have signed for him this writing, for he agrees to whatever is written above and seals (it).

I, Mari, bishop of Rima, assent to whatever is written above and seal (it).

I, Ḥoḥ, bishop of Balad, have signed this writing and have agreed to whatever is written in it, and have sealed (it).

I, Muše, bishop of Nhargor, have signed and agree to those things written above and seal (them).

I, Yoḥanan, bishop of Beit Zabdai, have signed and sealed.

I, Yoḥanan the presbyter, have signed at the command of Mar Šma', bishop of Piroz-Šabur, who agrees to everything written above, and I have sealed (it).

I, Yoḥanan, bishop of Ma'alta, have signed and agree to those things which are written above, and I have sealed and ratified.

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[1] Perhaps "'Aḥai": see above list.

[2] Perhaps "Maron": see above list.

[3] See above on 'Anpai-'Aḥai and in previous list.

I, Kodidad, bishop of Ḥarbgelal, have signed and sealed.

I, 'Abraham, bishop of Lašom, have signed and agreed to those things which are written above.

I, 'Abraham, bishop of Taḥal, have signed, sealed, and ratified the things written above.

{68} I, Marehraḥmeh, bishop of Beit Dasen, agree to the things which are written above, (and) have signed and sealed.

I, Šubḥališo', bishop of Balad, have signed and agreed to whatever is written above, and I have sealed (it).

I, 'Ador-Hormizd, presbyter of the clergy of Hormizd-'Ardašir[1], have been commanded by Mar Šila our bishop and have signed this book on his behalf, for he agrees to whatever is written in it and ratifies (it) with his seal.

I, 'Aba, presbyter and notary of Mar Daniyel, bishop of Karme, have signed at his command, for he agrees to all that is written above and seals (it).

I, Yazdgard, bishop of Šošter, have signed this writing and have agreed to all that is written above and have sealed (it).

I, Sidora the notary, have been commanded by 'Abošṭa, bishop metropolitan of Ḥdayab, to sign this writing on his behalf, for he agrees to whatever is written above and seals (it).

I, Šila the bishop, have agreed to all that is written above and have signed and sealed.

The Synod of Mar Babai is ended.

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[1] But see "'Abraham, Mari, and Šem'on" above.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR 'ABA

544 AD)

Again, the Synod of Mar 'Aba[1] the Catholicos.

This is a copy of the ecclesiastical writings which, by the grace of God, were composed by the chief bishop, the holy Mar 'Aba the patriarch, and the God-loving metropolitans, along with the rest of the bishops, in this month of Šahrir[2], in the thirteenth year of the accession of the gentle, merciful, and beneficent Kosrau[3], the King of Kings, preserved by divine grace, and in the fifth year of the catholical administration of the patriarchate of the holy chief bishop, Mar 'Aba, catholicos patriarch. (This was) after the dual {69} catholicate[4], which Mar 'Eliša' and Mar Narsa had introduced, had been completely abolished through the grace of the Lord Christ, the love of God his Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit . . . . . . and the unity of the catholical administration in Seleucia and Ctesiphon had been confirmed, both in all the East and in the contiguous territory, through the diligence which the chief bishop, the holy Mar 'Aba the patriarch, had shown, as well as the holy synod of God-loving metropolitans and bishops who were gathered with him; and after canons had been established concerning the manners which are appropriate to the life of those who are baptized in the mystery of the spiritual adoption of eternal life.

After the chief bishop, the patriarch, had committed himself to entering the contests for the sake of the name of Christ and the canons of his holy church, and following some of (these) contests he had been delivered over to exile for the sake of the truth, at that time, even in such a case, grace did not permit him to be silent. Instead, for the sake of the confirmation, support, and stability of the ordinances and canons of the united catholical administration, which, according to apostolic tradition, continues (in) and settles upon the patriarchal see in the church of Koke in the city of Seleucia, from which all administrations are begotten in the whole eastern region and in the contiguous territories, and for the sake of the true faith, and for definitions and rules of the Christian life-style for children of the church, he applied himself to gathering writings which were composed by the providence of (grace). Among them was the upright synod of "administrative acts"[5], and some were concerning orthodoxy in regard to the faith, which restores health. Some were about the conduct of honest ways, and some made known the deposition of the two persons who brought in the duality, and the pardons and determinations which were made regarding those who were with them. Some of them were about the decrees and canons of all the segments of ecclesiastical governance, and among them was the synodal letter[6] which includes the greater part of (the others), giving more light on each one of them, etc.

First, the acts of administrative reform, which took place in this way.

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[1] Ruled 540-552.

[2] December/January, Persian calendar.

[3] Reigned 531-579.

[4] The dual catholicate of Mar 'Eliša' and Mar Narsa lasted 524-539.

[5] ? for ܦܪ̈ܟܣܝܣܡܣܛܠܐ ܗܓܡ̈ܘܢܝܩܐ. The first word is unclear, but evidently includes praxis; the second word is hegemonikai.

[6] ܦܪ̈ܐܩܛܝܩܐ =praktike.

(This was) in the month of Prior Tešri, which is Ṭirmah, in the tenth year[1] of the merciful and beneficent Kosrau, the King of Kings, protected by divine grace, [preserved] for long years in the dominion of his realm in health of body, in joy of soul, in a merciful mind, and in good intentions, (this being) after, by the grace of God, the Creator, Lord, and Governor of all, and (by) the care of the second Cyrus, {70} more excellent than all kings, the gentle and merciful Kosrau, the King of Kings, Christ, the Savior of all creatures, had insinuated into his thoughts, because of the goodness of his will, that he constantly purpose all good things for his holy church; and likewise, also by the diligence and watchfulness of the true priests, the zealous metropolitans and bishops of various places, and through the prayers of all the saints, after the duality of primacy — which was an abomination before God and shameful before men, like a woman with two husbands or a body with two heads — had been destroyed and abolished completely, the same which had ruled for more or less fifteen years over all the churches in the whole glorious realm of the Persians and over the rest of the whole East and its contiguous regions through the laxity of the self-loving, those who are not terrified of violating the apostolic canons, the same at which even demons, as well as their ruler, Satan, tremble. (By now) the unity of administration had (already) been restored to the see of the patriarchate, which is established according to apostolic tradition in Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the prominent cities of Beit Aramaye. From the administration of this apostolic and paternal see spiritual ordinations, canonical ratification, and permission proceed and are transmitted, without respect of persons, to all positions and all orders of the ministry of the apostolic priesthood of every district and city in all the land of the realm of the Persians as well as the rest of the entire East and its contiguous regions. The weakness of the holy and Christ-loving Mar 'Aba the patriarch gathered (new) strength, for the moment the two great cities were reconciled, he returned from kiris[2] from the royal court. . . . .

. . . . . . of Piroz Šabur, a city of the Arabs. It too, having been troubled previously, was pacified. Without delay he made his descent, by the grace of God who helped him, to the district of Kaškar. This is . . . . . . the spirit of the holy men, the God-loving Mar Paulos, bishop metropolitan of Beit Lapaṭ and of all the region of Huzaye, Mar Šalmai, bishop of Karka dLedan, Mar Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, Mar Šila, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir, Mar 'Eliša', bishop of Šoštere, and Mar Kosrau, bishop of Šuš. They met him at the town of Zizorda where, with much teaching and with exhortation and persuasion, all the Kaškarites were reconciled to one another, and a God-loving pastor and bishop was chosen and ordained for them, Mar Šmuel, the same who was (chosen) with (the consent of) all the district entrusted to him. Also MŠarŠaya and Šmuel, who had warred with each other during the time of tumult over the matter {71} of episcopacy but had now been removed from the title and ministry of the episcopacy during the time of peace, submitted with great joy to their bishop Mar Šmuel, serving before him in the rank of the presbyterate as was fittingly permitted them by the ecclesiastical canons.

The holy and Christ-loving Mar 'Aba the catholicos and the same God-loving bishops departed thence, and also Šmuel the bishop (went) with them, and they made their entry to the district of Maišan. After many reforms had been effected in various places because of their passing through, they arrived in the city of Prat, the mother city of Maišan, where[3] they banned, ejected, and separated for ever from the rank, ministry, title, and entire administration of the episcopacy, Timai bar Dadišo', who was an evil-doer in the church of God, because of the divisions and strife which he introduced. (The action was taken) in proportion to the violation of oaths committed by him and the (subsequent) anathema which he brought upon himself. He was barred from the rank of the presbyterate and diaconate, and was anathematized from reception of the Holy Mysteries and anathematized from contact with the faithful until he should demonstrate repentance and it is ascertained whether he is worthy to be allowed to minister in the presbyterate or diaconate. But the God-loving Mar Yoḥanan, the bishop metropolitan, through the advice and permission of Mar Patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops, was entrusted with and confirmed in the episcopate of the city of Prat, of its metropolitanate, and of all the land of Maišan.

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[1] I.e., 541.

[2] The word is unknown. A footnote gives the variant reading "ܒܝܬ ܝܣ".

[3] ܐܝܟܐ for ܐܝܟܢܐ.

From there the fathers set off for Hormizd-’Ardašir, the (capital) city of Huzaye, and the God-loving Mar ’Abraham, bishop of Rima, accompanied them. And when they had made corrections there of all that was needed and had confirmed there the tranquillity and peace of Christ through the reconciliation of all its citizens with their pastor, the God-loving Mar Šila the bishop, they made their descent to the land of the people of Fars.

After inspecting and correcting, one after another, those things which they happened to meet on the course of the journey, they arrived at Rew-’Ardašir — the patriarch and the bishops with him, as well as Mar ’Abraham, bishop of Beh-Šabur, Mar Qardag, bishop of ’Ardašir-Koreh, and Mar Dawid, bishop of Qiš, these same being subsequently added to their assembly. They remained there for some time until they had confirmed their anathema, ejection, and removal of ’Isḥaq, who had been bishop there but who had been fittingly cast out of the rank of the ministry of the episcopate, and of Išo‘bokt, who had succeeded him and had named himself bishop uncanonically and without authority, {72} and of those who were named by ’Isḥaq or by Išo‘bokt to the title of the episcopate or one of the ranks of ecclesiastical ministry. And when Išo‘bokt offered repentance for the previous things which were done by him improperly while the duality held sway, and set down in writing at that time, with a good will, a resignation and withdrawal from the ministry, administration, and title of the episcopate to which he had been named uncanonically and without authority, the patriarch and the bishops received him in love and gave him the "peace". They allowed him to remain in a ministry which he had canonically received, and to continue as well in the honor of the presbyters if he should seek out, and be confirmed by ordination to, the presbyterate — just as all who were named by him or by ’Isḥaq before him with the title of the presbyterate and of the ministry were confirmed and were pardoned after they showed repentance and received ordination canonically.

Then, after they had defined and appointed these things and things such as these, and had also brought about the resignation of Mar ’Aqaq, who was the bishop metropolitan, from the ministry and administration of the episcopate and metropolitanate, and the excellent and God-loving Ma‘na was chosen in his stead — the same who received ordination from the patriarch and the bishops with him, and was established bishop for the city of Rew-’Ardašir and its administration, and metropolitan for it and for all the cities of the districts of their region — the holy and Christ-loving Mar ’Aba the patriarch and the God-loving Mar Paulos and Mar Ma‘na, bishops and metropolitans, and Mar Šalmai, Mar Mihrnarsa, Mar Šila, Mar ’Eliša‘, Mar ’Abraham, Mar ’Abraham, Mar Kosrau, and Mar Qardag the bishops made their departure from Rew-’Ardašir. After Dawid the bishop had been blessed by them he went to his own diocese, and they returned and came, with the help of Christ, to this land of Huzaye, inspecting and correcting, one after another, many things which were brought to them, attending to them in the villages and towns on the road to Fars as far as the village of Babnai of Huzaye.

From there, after Mar ’Abraham, the bishop of Beh-Šabur, had returned to his diocese because of an urgent matter, the patriarch and the bishops and metropolitans with him continued on, correcting those things which were necessary in various villages, starting from Sorag, and they arrived at the city of Šoštere. When they called Šem‘on the Nisibite to their council they charged him with improperly employing the title of the episcopate — which he did not possess, since he had not even received it — and administering ordination

{73} to the title of the presbyterate and diaconate unto many, violating the canon — though nothing like this came to them since he did not possess (the faculties) to give gifts such as these. But after he had repented greatly and offered penance fully because he had called himself a bishop though he was not and had administered in the name of the episcopate things which he was not authorized (to do) — things which were not (actually) administered except in an ineffectual name — and (after) he had sealed a letter of separation, removal, and resignation from the title, ministry, and administration of Sorag, Ram-Hormizd, or any other place, the patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops with him gave him the "peace" and allowed him to serve in the rank of the presbyterate in Šoštere, where the God-loving Mar 'Eliša', the bishop of Šoštere, was in charge of him.

After correcting these things and things such as these, and also, in the city of Šoštere, those who had declared themselves free of Šem'on had received pardon and had been completed by ordination, just as pardon had been given and administered to those of Fars and of various places, the patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops with him made their arrival at the metropolitan city of Beit Lapaṭ, adding to their assembly the God-loving Mar Šem'on, bishop of Piroz-Šabur. And inasmuch as he who is called 'Abraham bar 'Audmihr of Belapaṭ remained in his presumption and impudence, the same who was devoid of all good sense, modesty, and the fear of God, and was full to overflowing with all audacity, contrariness, and shamelessness, who was immersed in anathemas and bindings from his youth — judgment had first been made against him for fornication by the late Mar Bozaq, and, in like manner, he was also suspended and anathematized by the late Mar Šila the catholicos, that he might turn from his uncleanness and conduct himself with an upright disposition appropriate to Christians — he, though he had not been freed of these things, since he did not offer repentance for them, made bold also to apply himself to the rank of the presbyterate, which he had been warned not to approach. His censure by all the prudent multiplied at that time, and anathemas and bindings were increasingly added to him. Although he had not yet given satisfaction for former things, because of the most shameful duality which had laid hold of the churches of Christ at the time, for this same reason he was given opportunity and was able to do as he wished, so that he seized the holy vessels of the fearful ministry of the Mysteries of Christ and pawned and sold them. He hired worthless men and harlots with their proceeds, dispersing bribes, and administering the oblation[1], and gaining status among men who do not care about the truth. When the same man sent for Timai to come to pollute him[2] in violation of ecclesiastical canons, the wicked Timai was not able to come to him because {74} he had been reproved by the fathers, the true bishops of this region. They had instructed him not to cross the boundary, since it was not his to remove the limits established by the apostles or to venture to perform ordination so as to add other bishops in an adulterous[3] and contrary manner. Now Timai had sworn upon the altar that he would not come to this city in order to ordain another bishop beyond the one who existed legally. Timai, and Bar Sahde and Brik Mareh who were with him, had made an agreement and swore an anathema: "If we, either by our own agreement in Beit Lapaṭ or in another place, venture to establish another bishop in Beit Lapaṭ, let us be loosed and removed from the entire ministry of the priesthood, and let our ordination be no ordination." So when Timai, Bar Sahde, and Brik Mareh did not come to the city of Beit Lapaṭ, 'Abraham followed them to the district of Maišan, in heat for the rulership like a bitch raging after a male dog in her wantonness. And by means of a horse, money, and garments which he distributed to Timai, Bar Sahde, and Brik Mareh — as they acknowledged — they slipped and violated the oaths and anathemas which they had pronounced and sworn against themselves. They thought they had ordained 'Abraham, who was

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[1] ? for ܦܠܓ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. Possibly, "distributing gifts"?

[2] I.e., to ordain him uncanonically.

[3] ܠܒܪܐܝܟ for ܠܒܪ ܐܝܟ.

(instead) polluted by them. Not only did they not give the gift to him, but they also fell from their ranks on his account because of the anathemas and the expulsion which they swore against themselves, and were cast out of the priesthood.

There was added to Timai, Bar Sahde, and Brik Mareh, and to this accursed 'Abraham, the fearful sentence of judgment which was made by the metropolitans and bishops —especially by the late Mar Paulos, who had become the patriarch[1]. And after the passing of the late Mar Paulos, the dismissal and removal of the impudent persons was confirmed, for it was repeated by the metropolitans and bishops who gathered for the election of the person who was set apart for the patriarchate. Subsequently, in the presence of the God-loving Mar 'Aba the patriarch, and the metropolitans and bishops gathered with him in Beith Aramaye, the same audacious 'Abraham made confession, composing and sealing a deposition, which is this:

"In the month of Šbaṭ of the ninth year of the merciful and beneficent Kosrau, the King of Kings, preserved by divine grace, I, 'Abraham bar 'Audmihr of Huzaya, from the city of Beit Lapaṭ, acknowledge that at this time, after the late and worthy of all good memorials, the holy Mar Paulos, who was bishop patriarch, had departed, and divine grace intervened, and the Christ-loving Mar 'Aba arose in his stead to hold the administration of the patriarchate, I came for his salutation, hoping that he would hurriedly pass over my case and that I would perhaps be received without examination. {75} But because he had previously heard about me and had also learned from writings that I was anathematized and ejected, not only did he utterly not accept me, but he also confirmed the anathemas against me totally, ruling that none of the faithful may be permitted to associate with me, and also that I was not allowed to remain in these cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon except for three days. These things also seemed full of harshness in their outward appearance, yet great help was begotten unto me by them, for the sting in them brought about for me a sensibility of my transgression. When I saw that everyone regarded me as a stranger, penitence was stirred up in me and sorrow took possession of me. I stood before the door of the house of the catholicos barefoot, without a shoe and without a portion[2], in great lamentation.

"This, when it was announced to the holy and God-loving Mar 'Aba the patriarch, was pleasing in his eyes. He summoned me before him and I entered. In the sight of the metropolitans, bishops, and clergy, as well as the renowned faithful laymen from the district and cities of Beit Huzaye and those who were gathered with him from various places, he uttered a great homily, suiting the moment and the occasion, and (appropriate to) the manners and deeds of my transgression, from of old to the present, as he had learned and come to understand from the writings, which he carefully marshaled against me, requiring an answer from me to each and every one of them. With all long-suffering I was permitted to say all that I had to say, and to plead, and to reply, and though I was hoping that my words would vindicate me, I was found guilty by them, for our father the patriarch, as well as the metropolitans and bishops with him, compared my arguments, one with another, and one was refuted by another wrongfully spoken by me.

"When Mar Patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops with him in mercifulness had employed all gentleness and kind consideration toward me with paternal care, and I had listened to their teaching, which probed justly and bandaged pityingly, I thanked God the Lord of all, who confirms for his church the hope in his Christ, that he had counted me worthy to receive medications for my diseases through a just judgment such as this. I was moved in my mind how that, even though I had not served canonically, even in the rank of the diaconate or presbyterate, as was made clear by the writing of the late Mar Šila the catholicos[1], and Mar Bozaq the bishop — and (as) I too am now conscious of myself — (yet) I added to myself another bruise more grievous than these former things. I publicly bestowed the title of the episcopate upon myself which the accursed Timai the Pratite had ordained for me, who was (himself) deprived of all the ranks of the priesthood, since he had anathematized himself {76} and was also anathematized by the metropolitans and bishops — though he did not give me the episcopate because it did not even belong to him, nor did I receive by him the gift of the priesthood in any way, as he was completely deprived of it.

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[1] Mar Paulos held the office of Catholicos-Patriarch for a brief period in 539, between the dual Patriarchs, 'Eliša' and Narsa, and the election of Mar 'Aba.

[2] ܣܝܒܪܐ. Of uncertain meaning.

"Consequently I besought our father, Mar 'Aba the catholicos patriarch, and the metropolitans and bishops with him, to beg for mercies on my behalf before God, that he might pardon me for the title of the episcopate which I had promulgated concerning myself vainly, and the damages and miseries which came about because of me in the church of Christ, while I accepted all anathemas and bindings which had been placed upon me by the ban and restriction from this title of the episcopate — first by the late Mar Paulos the patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops who were with him, and after him by the metropolitans and bishops who were gathered together for the election of one who was suitable for the patriarchate. Now again I have been restricted by our father, Mar 'Aba the patriarch, and the metropolitans and bishops with him, with the same bindings and anathemas. I have agreed with all my heart and all my soul to flee from this sin and acquire spiritual healing for myself through the penitence which I manifest within these restrictions which have been established for me by reason of the great offense which is mine. I have given my word that henceforth, by reason of these anathemas which have been placed upon me with the agreement of my will, I have no more authority or permission to be called again by the title of the episcopate. If I should call myself a bishop hereafter, or anyone should (so) call me in my presence and I do not reproach him, or I should hear that they (so) call me somewhere and it pleases me and I do not rather feel sorrow and flee from sin and this title which I do not possess and in which am not entitled to minister, let me be bound and anathematized also from the rank of the presbyterate and diaconate — for I have the hope that I may be permitted to serve in one or both of them if I diligently make correction of previous mistakes.

"I, 'Abraham, have subscribed to and sealed this judgment — I, 'Abraham bar 'Audmihr — with the witness of Mar Ḥnana, metropolitan of Ḥdayab, Mar Yoḥanan, bishop of Paidangaran, Mar Dawid, bishop of Marwan, and the clergy of the paternal see of the cities of Beh-'Ardašir and Ctesiphon, the presbyters and heads of churches, Malkizdeq, Šem‘on, 'Aḥai, Girin, Šilai, Mari, Brik Yahbeh, 'Isḥaq, Šabur, Zakišo‘, Šmuel, Ya‘qob, Hoša‘, Daniyel, 'Abraham, 'Abraham, Babai, {77} Qayoma, Brikyahbeh, and Šem‘on; and the deacons, 'Aqaq, Brikišo‘, Brikišo‘, Sargis, Balwai, 'Eša‘ya, Ya‘qob, Hoša‘, 'Abraham, Ya‘qob, Posai, and 'Aḥai.

"I have also prevailed upon the excellent and elect of God, Mar 'Aba the bishop patriarch, and he places his seal upon it and confirms it."

Because he had thus cut off his hope completely, this 'Abraham was swallowed up in his evil after he returned here from Beit Aramaye. He did not offer repentance, nor did he submit to his bishop, the God-loving Mar Paulos the metropolitan. Instead he went and engaged himself in vanities according to his custom, collecting together foolish fellows and prostitutes for his assistance, as well as Jews and bandits[1] who were added to them. He also sought refuge among those who wickedly assisted him and sought to divide the church which is called Beit Mihr Qozyo, hoping to confound the ecclesiastical sentence through the judgment of outsiders.

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[1] Mar Šila had ruled as Catholicos-Patriarch 505-523 before the dual Patriarchate.

The patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops with him were patient with him until all his schemes had failed, and when he was at last convicted by the judgment of outsiders as well — not only by the Rad, the 'Ahmragar[2], the 'Austandare[3], the mobeds, and the rulers of the region of Huzaye and the judges of the land, but also by those through whom he had seized standing, who also commanded concerning him that he be shaved[4] and put to shame and bound hand and foot — not only he, but those who followed him, if they should remain with him in their impudence. It was decreed that he be utterly cast into prison as he deserved. However, he escaped and did not fall under control, and others were imprisoned in his stead.

Then as the patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops with him decreed a just judgment upon the impenitent one, appropriate to his offense and impiety, inasmuch as he had been removed completely from the title, ministry, and administration of the episcopate — which had never even come to him except as an empty title which he promulgated concerning himself — so too they cast him out, removed him, and expelled him, by the living and divine "Word" which holds the height and the depth, even from the presbyterate and diaconate, as well as from any ministry of a position of standing, without hope and without expectation for ever. They anathematized and proscribed him from entering the church, from reception of the Holy Mysteries, and from contact with the faithful, in the hope that he would repent, turn, and grieve for his sin and for the impiety which was committed through his hands. If this happens to be found in him through the penance which he manifests, he will be permitted to enter the church and receive the Mysteries according to the order of laymen.

{78} The patriarch and the metropolitans and bishops with him composed this record, which also contains this deposition and this sentence, when they were gathered in the city of Belapaṭ, and they validated and confirmed it with their seals in mutual agreement by the power of Christ, who said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them"[5], and, "Whatever you loose shall be loosed in heaven and on earth."[6]

On this authority, therefore, and by this power, I, 'Aba the patriarch, and Paulos and Ma'na, bishop metropolitans, and Šalmai, Mihrnarsa, Šila, 'Eliša', Šem'on, 'Abraham, Kosrau, and Qardag the bishops, have confirmed binding and anathema upon 'Abraham bar 'Audmihr and his banishment from the rank of the episcopate, from the title of the metropolitanate, from the ministry of the presbyterate and diaconate, and also from a position of standing. No one shall be allowed to be associated with him in the Mysteries or in eating or drinking until he manifests penance and is permitted by us to receive mercy in one way or another, such as I, the patriarch, may write and make known according to the penance which is manifested by him. Anyone who secretly or openly names him, calls him, or regards him by the title or category, or in the number or order of bishops, presbyters, deacons, or one of the orders of standing, either by word or by thought, whether nearby or far off, or in any of the ways described in these writings — whoever it is who transgresses against any of these things — if it is a man, let him have no regard[1] for himself, his wife, his children or his house. And if it is a woman, a boy, or a girl, let the same judgment come upon them, and may the wrath of God remain upon them with the "Amen" of all Christianity. But whoever heeds the things written here and keeps and fulfills them, may the blessing of Christ rest for ever upon him.

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[1] ܠܣܛܝ̈ܐ for ܠܘܣ̈ܛܐ.

[2] ܐܗܡܪܐܓ̈ܪ.

[3] ܐܘܣܬܢܕܪ̈ܐ.

[4] I.e., his beard was cut off.
[5] Mt. 18:20.
[6] Cf. Mt. 18:18.

I, 'Aba the patriarch, have signed, sealed, and confirmed these writings along with the God-loving metropolitans and bishops who have gathered with me, whose names are these:

I, Paulos, bishop metropolitan of Beit Lapaṭ, have signed, sealed, and confirmed.
I, Ma'na, bishop metropolitan of Rew-'Ardašir and of its province, have confirmed and sealed.
I, Šalmai, bishop of Karka dLedan, have signed and sealed.
{79} I, Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Šila, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, 'Eliša', bishop of Šoštere, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Šem'on, bishop of Piroz Šabur, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, 'Abraham, bishop of Rima, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Kosrau, bishop of Šuš, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Qardag, bishop of 'Ardašir-Koreh, have confirmed, signed and sealed.

I, Šem'on of Niṣibis, presbyter of Šoštere, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, 'Abraham, and Ḥabib, Balan, Ya'qob, Maršem'on, 'Andreos, Mar Šem'on, Mar Narsai, Yoḥanan, Barnai, and Barṣauma, presbyters of the church of Barnaḥla, all in all have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.
I, Mar Šem'on, and Saprai, Gaddai, Narsa, Papa, Bardoq, 'Abraham, Yazid, 'Aumid, and Narsa, presbyters of the church of Beit Mar 'Abraham, have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.
I, 'Isḥaq, Posai, and 'Eliya, presbyters of the church of Beit Mihrbozyad, have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.
I, Posai, Mar Šem'on, Marwai, Maron, and Marwai, presbyters of the church of Beit Yazdandad, have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.
I, Wardyab Qarogabyad[2], and I, 'Abraham, who am surnamed 'Aḥuh, Ṭerzastansalar[3] of Irankoreh Kosrau, and I, Dadaprid bar Šem'on, and I, Kodbodad Riṣhanolar[4], and I, 'Isḥaq bar 'Isḥaq, and I, Behdad bar 'Aḥwai, and I, Rayyan bar 'Abraham, and I, Šabur bar 'Abraham of Karka dLedan have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.
I, 'Ador-Hormizd bar 'Ardon, and I, Babai bar Posai, and I, 'Isḥaq bar Šalma, and I, 'Isḥaq bar 'Abi, and I, Mihr-Hormizd bar Malaka, and I, 'Abdalaha bar Hormizd, and I, Posai bar Šem'on, and I, Padwai bar Šalma, and I, Zadoq bar Sargis, and I, Hormizd bar Mar Šem'on, and I, Barba'šmin bar Mehdoq, and I, Posai bar Maron, and I, Mar Ya'qob bar Mehrin, and I, 'Aḥa dAbuh bar Šalma, and I, Mihrbozyad bar Gorya, elder of the merchants, and I, Qamizyad the merchant, son of Mar Šem'on, and I, 'Ardaq bar Šila, elder of the {80} silversmiths, and I, Benonin bar Gaddai, head of the goldsmiths, and I, 'Adai, head of the tinsmiths, from the city of Beit Lapaṭ, have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.

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[1] So ms; but perhaps read ܢܚܕܐ for ܢܚܪܐ, i.e., "let him have no joy in".

[2] ܩܪܘܓܒܝܕ. Chabot gives "Head of the Artisans". The translator is indebted to Prof. Joseph Habbi for this and the subsequent two references to Chabot, whose French text I neither possess, nor could read if I did possess it.

[3] ܛܪܙܣܬܢܣܠܪ. Chabot gives "Commander-in-Chief".

[4] ܪܝܫܢܘܠܪ. Again, Chabot gives "Copyist".

I, Marwai bar Brikišo‘, and I, Babwai bar ’Ada, and I, Posai bar Mari, and I, Mardwai bar Nabirodaq, from the city of Hormizd-’Ardašir, have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.
I, Brikišo‘ bar ’Ador-Hormizd, and I, Mihrkost bar ’Išma‘el, and I, Marqyana bar ‘Abdišo‘, and I, ’Abraham bar Babai from the city of Šoštere, have accepted, confirmed, and sealed.

[Third:] Concerning the conduct of honest ways.

To the God-loving metropolitans and bishops, along with every community of Christians in the East, ’Aba the patriarch sends greetings in our Lord our hope.

Your holiness is persuaded that for us men there is nothing so advantageous and helpful as the fear of God [when] it is present in us, if we are mindful [of it] and very carefully conduct our lives according to it. As it is written, "To fear God is the beginning of a good path"[1] — this, which all the riches of the world cannot equal, and without which all the beauty and comeliness of all men in all [their ranks], and of all the angels in all their orders as well, are [very] shameful and utterly loathsome. Every longing whose intensity is not directed to this is very abominable and utterly despicable, and a portion of torment is prepared in Gehenna for the one who (so) longs. All kinds of wisdom and knowledge which are not seasoned with it and do not accommodate their purpose to it [are] insipid, unprofitable, and senseless, and bring every injury to their possessors. All powers and all authorities which do not rest upon it and are not confirmed by it are [feeble] and infirm.

Anyone who restrains himself by this — I say, by the fear of God — and fixes his vision and the attention of his mind on it, whose readiness of will is directed toward it, who does not dispense his speech without it, and conforms all his dealings to it in the course of this short life during which opportunity exists for anyone who wishes to deal in the commerce of righteousness through the [practice] of virtues — whoever [is] such as this is a true [intimate] of Christ. But whoever [scorns] the commandments of our Savior and behaves with a high hand in the arrogance of his mind, the same cannot {81} be numbered in any of the ranks of Christianity, and if he ventures to deceive in name or in appearance, numbering himself in the rank of the faithful, he does this in vain, for he does not possess spiritual wedding garments, the same being the virtuous manners suitable to the true faith. Concerning such a one judgment and decree is made by the One who raises all generations: "He shall be bound hand and foot and cast into [outer] darkness [where] there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."[2]

Therefore [it is incumbent upon us], and all the leaders in every land and all regions, with all [diligence at all times and at every hour, to teach and to admonish, and to bear witness to, and to caution all those who in every place are numbered in the various ranks of ecclesiastical orders, that they should beware of traveling in the broad way leading to destruction. Instead, they should be the more careful] to enter into the narrow door by their eschewal[3] of shameful, [senseless] lusts, the love of an excess of transitory possessions, [and the pride] of human desire for praise, so that they may thereby escape from the eternal torment of Gehenna [and arrive] at the unending pathway of eternal life.

[Since] the Enemy of our humanity is jealous of our life, he labors diligently in the children of disobedience — that is, in those who do not heed the teaching of divine Scriptures — to fulfill in them his desire through their swerving aside from customary duties, as

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[1] Cp. Psalms, Proverbs.
[2] Cf. Mt. 22:13.
[3] ܒܡܣܬܪܚܩܘܬܗܘܢ for ܒܡܣܬܪܩܘܬܗܘܢ.

I think. (This happened) especially in the time not long past when[1] the duality held sway over the see of the patriarchate, and the same division ruled over almost all those in the land for fifteen years, more or less, when it confused and sifted all the ecclesiastical orders like grains of wheat in a sieve because of the occasion afforded by the lax and self-loving. For from that time on, in the likeness of grains of wheat which are all shaken while being sifted, moving up and down and down and up, being cast all at once from side to side in the sieve in all [confusion][2] and without orderliness, almost all those who were numbered in the order of the faithful were confused and damaged because of leaders who were in an uproar against one another. Each one who happened along walked just as he wished and (as) it was pleasing in his own eyes, outside the ecclesiastical canons.

But now that the duality of leadership has ceased through the mercifulness of God and the watchfulness of the King of Kings, Kosrau, maintained by the mercies of heaven, and the prayers of all the saints, and the unity of leadership of the catholic see is restored, and the greater part of the provinces {82} are even now properly guided and at peace, it appeared to us that as the ranks of leaders have been set in order, so, necessarily, the [orders of] faithful [laymen] should be corrected by their turning away [from their offenses], those in which [they labored] during the time [of tumult], and especially by their constancy [in what is proper].

When we and the metropolitans and bishops who were with us labored in the reconciliation of the church, we made manifest, decreed, and defined that, according to the sense of divine Scriptures, by the will and command [of Christ, thus it shall be:] clerics of the cities [and villages shall have no authority] to form bands [or make alliances] or employ oaths [or writings] in order to rise up against [their leaders] or against one another, [or to seize standing among laymen, assailing their conscience with tale bearing. No longer will the laymen be allowed to act in such a way as they acted in the time of confusion, to bring in divisions] and strife, or to help those who venture to do anything such as this.

[These things,] by definition and decree, concern those who ought to remember continually what is written: "Obey your leaders."[3] To these, as to honored members, we offer advice: let none of them [go round from house] to house, or become tutors or stewards [for the laity], so as to dishonor the priesthood [and inflict] sins upon the faithful laymen. Also, the laymen should beware of helping such as these. God has ordained for the marvelous sustenance of our nature's constitution and for the procreation of our posterity — not indiscriminately in the likeness of beasts, but in an orderly fashion, which is suitable for rational beings — and for a [bond] of love in the pure and lawful intimacy of a man with his wife. [But] beast-like men have brought about confusion, each of them not consenting to one wife apiece, like one Adam of old with one woman, Eve, for each [ventures to take] another during the life of his [legal] wife, trespassing against her canonically, and (thus) he [has] two wives, like the woman who has two [husbands], which is a [horrible] thing. [Or often] he divorces the first (wife) without just cause and is joined [to one] who entices [him after her, either because of her outer beauty like a senseless, lascivious man, or because of money, wealth, and property like a greedy man who is not satisfied. Or in addition to these two[4] he is also bold to draw near to his step-mother, or to his paternal uncle's wife, or to his maternal uncle's wife, or to his paternal aunt, or to his maternal aunt, [or to his sister,] or to his daughter-in-law, or to his daughter, or {83} to his step-daughter, or to the daughter of his son, or to the daughter of his daughter, or to the daughter of his step-daughter, like the Magians, or to the wife of his brother like the Jews, or to an unbelieving woman like the pagans. Concerning these things, and things such as these, we and the metropolitans and bishops with us have determined and decreed by the divine "Word" which governs the heights and the depths, judging and confirming in accord with [the sense] of divine Scriptures, that none of the faithful shall be allowed to engage in illegal intimacy in any of the ways spoken of above, harming and confusing the rightful prerogatives of lawful marriage, which is ordered by God for the assistance of our rational nature in his [ineffable] wisdom. We have also made this clear, that for one who [already] has two wives or is joined to a pagan woman, or to his step-mother, or to the wife of his paternal uncle, or to the wife of his maternal uncle, or to his paternal aunt, or to his maternal aunt, [or to his sister,] or to his daughter-in-law, or to his daughter, or to his step-daughter, or to the daughter of his step-daughter, and also for one who is from one of the ranks of the religious and has intimacy with the wife of his brother, a period of time will be granted, such as a month or two or, at the most, three (months) or a year, if these agree to dissolve the matter between themselves and those to whom they have been joined, and separate themselves from them — for in the time when there were disorders they fell into such things as these often — but (only) if they are these[1]. However, I say concerning one who has brought in another woman while his own wife is living, or has united with one who is not a believing woman, or if he is joined to his step-mother, or the wife of his paternal uncle, or to the wife of his maternal uncle, or to his paternal aunt, or to his maternal aunt, [or to his sister,] or to his daughter-in-law, or to his daughter, or to his step-daughter, or to the daughter of his step-daughter, or one who has taken for himself the wife of his brother, if he does not come and ask the priests to give him time to be freed of his sin, as we above stated, or (if) he takes up the time to make an agreement (to act as required)[2], but is (then) scornful, and does not set right his offense but continues in it out of sight — to anyone such as this let it be known that he is barred, by the "Word of God", from entry into the church, reception of the Holy Mysteries, and contact with the faithful until he departs from this, his sin. Also let this be known, that the judgment which is upon men who act perversely in such things as these is the same for women as well, as it is written, even though, in regard to one who is the daughter of a brother or the daughter of a sister, they are not (so) defined for us in the Scriptures[3].Concerning religious[4] then, who have taken the wives of their brothers, we have spoken above.But concerning faithful laymen who have been ensnared unwittingly in this sin of intimacy with the wife of a brother, thinking that this was not a sin for someone to take {84} his brother's wife, but to the contrary thought it was even very good because in ignorance they did not understand the words of the divine Scriptures, concerning these we make determination thus, leaving it up to their will, by way of their own decision, to abstain from this sin of unlawful marriage with the advice and admonition of the priests of the church, for it is necessary for them for their own correction. If it is difficult for them and they are not able to separate by reason of the great length of the years they have had with them, or (because of) the children who were born to them by them, we decree concerning them that both of them should fast. I say, that is, that he who takes the wife of his brother and she who has had intimacy [with her brother-in-law] should together beseech and supplicate God for a full year on account of their offenses, and let them give (for) the redemption of their sin, to strangers and to the poor of the church in their city or in their village, a portion of the property which they possess, according to their means, and they will be pardoned. But after it has been made known and revealed clearly by the divine Scriptures and also by these writings what has been done by us concerning this matter — for so many sins do they acquire who labor in it — if any of the religious or laymen venture to be ensnared willfully in this sin and scorn this definition which we have made concerning it, so as to be joined henceforth with the wife of his brother, let him know this: by the living and divine "Word" which holds the height and the depth and governs all things made, he is bound and anathematized in heaven and on earth from entering the church, receiving the holy Sacraments, and contact with the faithful. Since we have explained clearly concerning all these things hitherto, so hereafter no one is permitted, by the "Word of God", to transgress against any of these things. If one of the religious or one of the faithful laity ventures to fall into one of these things and is not corrected, or hereafter he does not take care and is not terrified of falling into one of these things, or into any of those things which resemble such things, or into any offense whatever, he shall be admonished and suspended, whoever he may be, whether man or woman. [Anyone who does not loathe and separate himself from] contact with one who has been suspended — whether in secret or in the open, whether in deed or in intention — he (too) shall be in suspension [and in anathema] like him who is suspended, and shall be inhibited, and may [the wrath] of God from heaven remain upon them (both), with the "amen" of all Christianity. None of the religious or faithful laymen shall be allowed to accompany them [on the day] of their death or to accompany their biers in attendance, or to enshroud them on the day of their departure, either openly or in secret. Instead, since {85} they separated themselves by their actions from the exalted practice of Christianity and were polluted with unlawful marriage like the beasts, without discrimination, so also in their death they should be separated and alienated from any fellowship with the faithful, and should be given the burial of an ass like the beasts they resembled in their customs. May the blessing of Christ be poured out upon each one who is observant, watchful, and diligent, and may it preserve him continually. Be firm, [and be careful] to make these things known without negligence. [Glory to Christ who honors his church with industrious shepherds, and his mercies and grace be upon us for ever and ever! Amen.]

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[1] ܒܕ for ܒܪ.

[2] ܒܠܠܘܬܐ for ܒܠܒܠܘܬܐ.

[3] Heb. 13:17.

[4] For ܒܬܪܬܗܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ.

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[1] I.e., those who are in an incestuous or levirate marriage and who agree to dissolve it.

[2] ܐܘ ܠܒܢ ܕܒܥܐ ܘܥܒܕ ܬܢܘܝ.

[3] E.g., cf. Gen. 24.

[4] ܒܢ̈ܝ ܩܝܡܐ.

Fourth: concerning the deposition of the two persons who brought in the duality, and concerning the pardons and determinations which were made for those who were with them.'

Aba the catholicos to the children of the faith, the clergy in all their ranks and the laymen in all their orders in the land of Segistan, abundant greetings in our Lord our hope, your mutual Peacemaker. Concerning the matter of the God-loving Mar 'Eliša' and the blessed Mar Narsa, who strove against one another for the rank of the catholicate, and also concerning various other matters which you wrote to us about for your instruction, we have written down distinctly in a reply to your letter to us, which we previously sent to you, when first we informed you how that neither Mar 'Eliša' nor Mar Narsa — whether (it be) both of them or (either) one of them — had received the priestly ordination of the catholicate honestly, canonically, or lawfully. For while the matter of Mar Narsa, who was chosen first, had not yet been settled, Mar 'Eliša' took it upon himself to become become disdainful and laid this groundwork of tumult, and also because, though Mar Narsa had not, up to that point, contended the matter, he also rushed to the primacy incautiously, while victory or defeat had not yet been clear between the two of them, or for one of them. And though eagerness for the primacy, and especially the catholicate, is uncomely in anyone whatsoever — and was utterly (so) in these two, in that they accepted the dual primacy without right and illegally, which, it is manifestly clear and evident beyond measure, is harmful, injurious, and disadvantageous to the manners, ways, and life of men, and an abomination before {86} God, and hateful to Christianity, and is a disgrace and alien to the church of Christ, like two heads for one human body or two husbands violating one woman, for it was fitting for the two of them diligently and prudently to flee and hold themselves at a distance from this thing — (yet) they, without trembling and without care, stumbled and fell by it, and from the two of them the duality and division held sway and was administered in every place and over everyone in the Christian economy. The laws and commandments of Christ and the canons and admonitions of his apostles were rejected and neglected for many years. This I also made known to you clearly, how the blessed Paulos the catholicos, after the complete unification of the primacy of the catholicate and of all ranks of ecclesiastical leadership, which had been confused and was near to extinction, had been set aright and restored by him through the grace[1] and power of Christ, the Lord of all, and the assistance of the mild, gentle, and philanthropic Kosrau, the King of Kings, was diligent first to make determination, set limits, and pass judgment upon the bishops by the "Word of God", and after his departure I also felt, thought, and acted the same. Thus we have spoken, enacted, and confirmed that, since Mar Narsa and Mar 'Eliša' sought the right hand of the priesthood of the primacy of the catholicate without discrimination and not according to the laws and canons of Christianity, and were consecrated as well without the will and agreement of the two cities, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, no one from any of the ranks and orders of Christians is allowed, by the incomprehensible "Word of God", to consider, call, or name catholicos in any way the late Mar Narsa, who has already departed, nor Mar 'Eliša', who by his own choice has resigned and distanced himself from the order and work of the primacy of the catholicate, for neither one of them was so legally. We also wrote this to you, that Mar Paulos and the bishops have dismissed, removed, and abolished the bindings, anathemas, writs, and charges made by Mar Narsa and his partisans against Mar 'Eliša' and his partisans, and by Mar 'Eliša' and his partisans against Mar Narsa and his partisans. First the late Mar Paulos (so acted), then I as well, when he departed, agreed, and thus we spoke and acted with the authority of the Holy Spirit. And because on both sides they were not properly established during the time of the duality and tumult, and no action could be carried out by them, (we wrote to you) how that Mar Paulos and the bishops, when there was no recourse and because of the exigencies of the matter — and we also did this — pardoned and blessed with prayer and supplication before God anyone who had received the right hand of the priesthood, or the confirmation of baptism, or any blessing whatsoever, or the laying-on of hands in the name of God, from the party of 'Eliša' or from the party of Narsa {87} during the time of the duality. First Mar Paulos, and after him we as well, agreed and confirmed the same by the authority and grace of Christ our Lord and Savior. Just as Mar Paulos and the bishops (acted), so after him our weakness (has acted). This also was duly accomplished through the grace of God: if there is an episcopal see with one bishop alone occupying it rightly, and he is a bishop other than one who was made by the party of 'Eliša' or by the party of Narsa during the time of the duality, and there is no defect or flaw in him, the same, since he is already free of guilt, should be confirmed for the episcopal see, and no one may molest him by the "Word of God". If there are two bishops from the two parties for one see, the one of the two who possesses virtuous ways and an upright faith shall be confirmed in the episcopacy by the "Word of God", and the other shall serve in the rank of the presbyterate, not concerning himself with the business of the episcopate or troubling the church beyond this. If the two of them are in good order and genuine, he who was made first shall be confirmed in the episcopate, [and the other, as long as he who is confirmed in the episcopate lives,] shall have no right, by the "Word of God", to the administration or leadership of the episcopate. Even if he does not stir up trouble, he has no right, by the "Word of God", at the right hand of the episcopacy. However, it is permitted to him to receive the Sacrament in the diaconicon or in the apse before the Altar. If he who was confirmed in the episcopate should depart first, then the other shall be confirmed in his place in the episcopate and upon the see. If the two of them are not suitable, they shall both be removed and shall serve in the ranks which they held previously. In the same manner also, concerning the direction of the episcopacy of your land: according to the letter which was written to us in the loving-kindness of Christ by the greater part of you about the confirmation of Yazid-'Aprid, who first received ordination to the episcopate, we have confirmed Yazid-'Aprid in the episcopacy for you and your land; this has also been written down by us for you in a reply which we composed for your diocese. Inasmuch as, after we had written to you concerning the confirmation of the episcopacy of Yazid-'Aprid, Sargis also came to us, and writings came to us from the rest of you pointing out his honesty and suitability, and also steadfast men who were acquainted with him, who happened to be here — especially Surin of Beit Garmai, the chief of the camel-drivers of the queen, as well as some distinguished persons — bore strong testimony to the life-style of Sargis; and also inasmuch as he had accepted ordination to the episcopate during the time of peace without authorization, in the sight of those who were gathered with us Sargis accepted the word which we {88} caused him to testify to before God: "At the time I received ordination I was not yet aware, nor had I heard what had been corrected and set right by the unified catholicate." And furthermore, because of the remoteness of your land from which he came — and the wear and tear of the road was indeed evident in him — and also because, as we heard from reliable men, while making the journey he continued every day in fasting and in prayer; and here too, on account of the fact that he had received the episcopate improperly, he greatly sorrowed, lamented, and repented — indeed because of these things and things such as these, we grieved for him, and although, as we had written to you, he was barred from the right hand of the rank of the episcopate, we pardoned him before our Lord and gave him the "peace" and a ministry, and we gave him participation in the oblation. And because we also heard this from Sargis and from some of these men, that in your land there is a certain place that is very suitable for an episcopal see, (and) since the same thing had previously been reported concerning (this place), therefore, in order for the pacification of the tumult, and for the increase of your tranquillity and that of your land, it seemed to us that as long as both Yazid-'Aprid and Sargis live, Yazid-'Aprid ought to hold and govern in the episcopacy the church of Zarig, Pareh, and Qaš, along with their neighborhoods and all that belongs to them, and no one is allowed to molest or afflict him by the "Word of God"; and Sargis the bishop should hold and govern in the episcopacy the churches in Bast and Rokot, and no one is allowed to hinder him by the "Word of God". As long as Yazid-'Aprid lives, Sargis is not allowed in the Christian church which is in Zarig, Pareh[1], and Qaš, to command or to perform the work of the episcopacy, for they belong to Yazid-'Aprid, and we have so adjudged. As long as Sargis lives, Yazid-'Aprid is not permitted in the churches in Bast or Rokot, to command or to perform the work of the episcopacy, if Sargis is received there. If one of the two should depart[2], the other who remains shall also hold and govern the churches of the one who departs first according to the custom which obtained prior to the tumult in all the land of Segistan. When Sargis comes to you, then, and brings you this letter, let it be reported in writing by Yazid-'Aprid and by you to the clergy and faithful laymen in Bast and Rokot that Sargis may be confirmed in the episcopal see of Bast and Rokot. If the people of Bast resist accepting an episcopal see in Bast, let the reason, whatever it is, be reported to us — by Yazid-'Aprid, by you, and by the people of Bast — why the Bastites are not amenable to this. While you are informing us and we are seeing whether {89} or not the place is suitable for an episcopal see, Yazid-'Aprid shall govern the episcopacy in Bast and Rokot as well as in Zarig, Pareh, and Qaš, and Sargis shall agree with him in love and in harmony, and though he may retain the ordination to his episcopal priesthood — except for the work and leadership of the episcopacy — he may dwell wherever he wishes, but by the "Word of God" he shall not be allowed to lay the right hand of the priesthood upon anyone whatsoever if he is not accepted in Bast, or to stand at the head of the people and to pray in the order of bishops in the church, or to renew the tumult and duality. However, he is allowed to receive the sacrament in the diaconicon or in the chancel before the altar in the order of bishops, and if Yazid-'Aprid should depart first, no one shall be allowed, by the "Word of God", to be ordained in his place as long as Sargis lives, but only Sargis, by the "Word of God", shall succeed to his office. Along with these things we also make this known to you: neither Sargis, nor Yazid-'Aprid, nor any from the ranks of Christians, shall be allowed, either singly or together, by the "Word of God", to be joined to Dawid the bishop who is bound and anathematized by us, excepting only if a letter is sent to you by us for his pardon and the loosing of his suspension. Also Sargis accepts and agrees to all that is written in this letter, and he has given us (his) word, before the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that he has no authority to act in any other way, and has set his seal upon it and validates (it) with us. After these things, also this: if Yazid-'Aprid prefers bishop Sargis in the leadership[1] (of) the episcopacy in Qaš as well, as Sargis says, let him also govern the episcopacy in Qaš. To these decrees and definitions the God-loving Mar Ḥnana, metropolitan of Ḥdayab, Mar Dairaya, metropolitan of Beit Garmai, Mar Muše, bishop of Beit Bagaš, Mar Yausep, bishop of Lašom, Mar Barnun, bishop of Ṭarihan, Mar Šem'on, bishop of Ma'alta, Mar Paulos, bishop of Barḥis, Mar Maruta, bishop of Taḥal, Mar Ya'qob, bishop of Paidangaran, and Mar Yoḥanan, bishop of Azerbaijan, have also agreed, and they have placed their seals upon them and confirmed (them).

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[1] ܒܛܝܒܘܬܐ for ܛܝܒܘܬܐ.

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[1] For ܦܪܘܗ. There is a change in spelling from ܦܪܗ.

[2] A euphemism for "to die".

Fifth: concerning definitions and canons for all portions of ecclesiastical leadership.

To my brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving Mar Yoḥanan, bishop of Dohamai-'Ardašir, its metropolitan and that of all the province of Maišan, Mar Ḥnana, bishop of 'Arbil, its metropolitan and that of all the province of Ḥdayab, {90} Mar Dairaya, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, its metropolitan and that of all the province of Beit Garmai, and Mar Ma'ana, bishop of Rew-'Ardašir, its metropolitan and that of all the province of Fars, with the rest of our God-loving brothers and fellow-ministers, the bishops of Beit Aramaye and of the various places supervised by our patriarchal see, and our brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving bishops of the province on the border of the West, the district of Nisibis, and our brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving bishops of the province of the Maišanites, and our brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving bishops of the province of Beit Huzaye, the district of Beit Lapaṭ, and our brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving bishops of the province of Ḥdayab, and our brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving bishops of the province of Beit Garmai, and our brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving bishops of the province of Fars, and our brothers and fellow-ministers, the God-loving bishops from Khardad and beyond, as they are within the dimensions and boundaries of their dominions, the bishops nearby and far off, whether in the North or in the East: 'Aba the patriarch, your friend, bids you much peace in our Lord, the Hope and Keeper of his fearers and the Guardian of his church.

Your brotherhood is aware, O watchful shepherds of the rational sheep of our Lord Jesus Christ, that so long as the human body remains in this transitory life in orderliness and serenity, it has need for its maintenance (certain) useful things, that it might not be smothered or coarsened by superfluity, nor wane or become weak through want, nor become troubled and agitated by irrational things, or go astray in vanities and become abandoned, hastening to perish for some occasion or other of carelessness, just so — and even more so — it is necessary for you, along with us, since you are holders of the keys to the kingdom of heaven, to be diligent, with all our will and with all our soul and with all our might, and attentive to the definitions and canons of the church of God, which is the spiritual body of our Savior, that those things which are commanded by divine wisdom to be done for our benefit might not, by reason of a human and kindly desire to please, be omitted from among our people. Neither should those things which are unseemly and inappropriate for any of the ranks of Christianity be done in our congregation through laxness of leadership. For whenever the head is healthy, so too all beneath his governance are, with all ease, preserved without harm, for they pay attention to him and are guided properly by him. But when he is ill, whoever he may be, through his own willful inattention, {91} all whom he guides treat him with contempt. It is difficult for them to be led in an orderly fashion, for they are scandalized by those things which are improperly done by him.

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[1] ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ for ܡܕܒܪܢܐ.

Therefore it is necessary for us, before much else, to concern ourselves with the business of leaders, for all ecclesiastical care depends upon them, and through them all matters of godly worship are perfected, and without them there is no way upon earth for Christianity to be established otherwise, or to grow and flourish among men. For that reason also our Lord, after he had been made known to Israel through the testimony of the Baptist as well as the voice from on high, at once chose apostles for his discipleship. And after working signs and wonders and giving instruction, out of necessity he showed beforehand through his parables concerning the preachers of his gospel and the leaders of his church, and concerning the heavenly gift which they would receive, and the authority they would hold in the height and in the depth, and concerning the manners appropriate to them, and concerning their patience in afflictions, and their labors in his gospel, and concerning that which belongs to his gospel, and concerning those things to be done by it and with it, and concerning their contests and trials on behalf of it, and concerning those things which were going to happen before our time, and, even now, in our days, and after us, one after another, while prohibiting them from all things unseemly for them. And also the chosen vessel, the blessed Paul, who took the name of Christ to the people and the peoples, in bonds and scourgings and the various afflictions which he underwent on behalf of the truth, with great diligence provided for leaders of the church, and assigned metropolitans in the mother cities and bishops in the cities.

The holy fathers as well, who were chosen after the apostles, followed suit, while there were none among the metropolitans or bishops who ventured to transgress against the limits which were established by a patriarch, and the bishops were not allowed to exalt themselves over the metropolitans, but a trustworthy bishop knew the time of his appointment with the metropolitan, and a wise metropolitan did not forget the time of his coming to the patriarch, as may be seen in the western region and in the regions contiguous to it. For even if in a matter of faith strife and divisions took place for various reasons, yet in a matter of rules — that is, in apostolic canons and in the ordinances of the priesthood and ecclesiastical boundaries — no one there ventured to be scornful and (then) escaped the retribution and judgment appropriate to his contempt. For no one under his control is able to make void those things which are defined properly by a bishop, {92} as also a bishop is not allowed to dismiss or transgress those things which are rightly forbidden[1] or defined by a metropolitan. In the same way, there is no authority for metropolitans or bishops to abrogate or loose those things which are forbidden[2] or defined by a patriarch, for the Holy Spirit has arranged the affairs of the priesthood so that the lower orders might depend upon the middle, and the middle upon the higher, as degrees by which they might be elevated as they are deemed worthy to receive the promise of ascent to heaven, and from which those who do not obey the truth fall, to be thrown down to the depth of punishment.

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[1] ܡܬܟܠܝܢ for ܡܬܬܟܠܝܢ.

[2] ܡܬܟܠܝܢ for ܡܬܬܟܠܝܢ.

Therefore, whenever the patriarch summons the metropolitans and bishops, or a metropolitan sends for the bishops, or a bishop sends for a rank from among the members of his administration, they should heed them swiftly and without negligence, for they have no authority to transgress against their word. Again, if metropolitans or bishops visit the see of the patriarch, or bishops the locality of the metropolitan, and the patriarch or the metropolitan for any reason should not be found to be in their see, the bishops or the metropolitans are not allowed to enter — not even into the city in which the throne of the patriarch resides. If it should happen that they do enter, they are not allowed to give command, to act, or to compose writs in any way without him and without his permission in a matter of administration or of ecclesiastical affairs, nor to minister in the liturgy[1] without him, nor bishops, in the same way, in the see of a metropolitan, excepting only when they may be with the patriarch. According to this tradition, which is apostolic, the same things continue in this, our eastern region, and in the regions contiguous to it, and come by the will of Christ.

If it has happened at times (that) there has been enmity, through the encouragement of Satan, and bishops have striven unduly against metropolitans, or some of the metropolitans improperly have contended at times with the patriarch and have ventured to speak in an unauthorized fashion and to do uncanonically something inappropriate for them, and something which was spoken or something which they did was not acceptable, yet those things which were done by them in a hostile manner came to naught, while those things which are of the order of paternal administration remained as they were and were shaken in nothing. Nevertheless, if during an entire period — a duration of fifteen[2] years — the duality held forth over the patriarchate, and disorder[3] and dissension were poured out upon all the churches of the East and of the regions contiguous to it, and all orders were confused, and the ecclesiastical canons were torn in pieces, and everyone was guided according to his own will with all {93) impudence and disarray, these things also were brought to naught with the help of Christ, who caused the duality, which had impaired the patriarchate, to pass from his church. The unity of the administration of the catholicate was duly restored, and ordinances and canons were enacted and defined for the sake of the ecclesiastical governance of various places and for the discipline of the life and manners of the entire community of believers, through the late Mar Paulos the catholicos and by our weakness after him, when we journeyed from Beit Aramaye and, with the metropolitans and some of you bishops who gathered with us, came first to Kaškar, and from there to Maišan, and so to Fars, and then to Beit Huzaye.

And because after these things the late Mar Paulos, the metropolitan and bishop of Beit Lapaṭ, departed from this life, inasmuch as they had sent for us to establish in his stead one whom divine grace had chosen, but we were unable to go down to them; and also in Nisibis strife had already held sway for not a few years, and their bishop, after they had afflicted him greatly, withdrew himself and remained in his house, and we were hindered from going up to them to effect reform for their administrative see as in other places; and also the time was not opportune to inform all of you to meet with us and form a council for the sake of whatever things may be pressing, for it was full of much difficulty, therefore, so that no one, until our Lord helps and there is a council for the profit of the community, should give occasion to the Accuser to introduce tumult into Beit Lapaṭ or Nisibis as happened in Fars, when certain people once sought the leadership of the metropolitanate without the permission of the catholicos, and those who were from that place were troubled all in all and fell into distresses and deprivations until, with difficulty, this was brought to an end among them by the meeting of us and of the metropolitans and some of you bishops at that place: it seemed to us, necessarily, that we should compose these writings and send (them) to the love of God which is in you, for in them we have determined and decreed, with your consent, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the will of his Father, and the operation of his Holy Spirit, that neither in Beit Lapaṭ nor in Nisibis nor in any other place are bishops of their provinces allowed — or bishops or metropolitans from some other province — without our permission, presence, or letters, to consecrate a bishop metropolitan, either from those who are sanctioned or (those who are) suspended, to occupy the see of Beit Lapaṭ or Nisibis or any place whatever. If they should venture to ordain, or are of a mind to seat, {94} one who is consecrated for Beit Lapaṭ or Nisibis, or one who has been granted permission to occupy one of them or another place, whoever he may be, in whatever way, by the "Word which holds the height and the depth", he shall be dismissed and removed from the ministry of the priesthood and from the rank and title of leadership. None of the metropolitans and bishops, or of the rank of clergy or laymen, shall be allowed to adhere to him or his writings, or to fellowship with him.

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[1] For ܠܫܡܫܐ.

[2] ܚܡܫܥܣܪܐ for ܚܡܫܥܣܪ̈ܐ.

[3] ܕܠܚܘܬܐ for ܕܠܝܚܘܬܐ.

Again, if the metropolitans and bishops should transgress in any way against all or a portion of all those things which are written by us in these writings, from their beginning to their end, and should venture to abrogate the apostolic tradition and the ecclesiastical canons, let it be known to them that, by the "Word of God", they are removed from their administrative ministry, for, as we have made known above, the bishops and metropolitans are not allowed to transgress the ecclesiastical decrees and canons, so that in this way the peace of the church may be preserved and the name of God glorified.

Then place your signature and make known your agreement to these writings, and seal each and every one of them[1], so that they may be handed over to us swiftly by the hand of their carrier, Muše, a brother of the community, by the help of our Lord.

Be strong, and pray with us for the state of the world and the tranquillity of the whole church, and for the life, health, and preservation of Kosrau, the King of Kings, kept by divine grace, and for all men, among whom is our poor self.

I, 'Aba the patriarch, have composed, sealed, and confirmed.
I, Yoḥanan, bishop of Dohamai-'Ardašir, metropolitan of it and of all Maišan, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Ḥnana, bishop of 'Arbil, metropolitan of it and of the whole land of Ḥdayab, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Dairaya, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, metropolitan of it and of all the land of Beit Garmai, have signed, confirmed, and sealed.
The letter of the agreement of Mar Ma'na, bishop of Rew-'Ardašir, metropolitan of it and of all the land of Fars.
I, Šmuel, bishop of Kaškar, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Muše the bishop, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Šila, bishop of Kaškar dMaišan, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, 'Abraham, bishop of Šharqart, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
{95} I, Šila, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, 'Abraham, bishop of Rima, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Muše, bishop of Beit Bagaš, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Yausep, bishop of Lašom, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, 'Eliša', bishop of Šoštere, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.

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[1] ܚܬܡܝ for ܚܬܡܘܢ.

I, Šem‘on, bishop of Ma‘alta, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Boktišo‘, bishop of Ḥarbgelal, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.
I, Marqos, bishop of Beit Daraye, have confirmed, signed, and sealed.

The synod of the holy Mar ’Aba the patriarch is ended.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR YAUSEP

554 AD)

Again, the synod of Mar Yausep[1] the catholicos and the bishops with him.

To our venerable and God-loving brothers and fellow-ministers, the metropolitans and bishops of the provinces of the eastern region, those who, in the true faith, which is in Christ, are partakers in the paternal succession with the apostolic see in the church of Koke in Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the royal cities, your friend, thirsting for your beloved sight, Yausep, the servant and minister of the community, who is, by the grace of God and the fellowship and agreement of all the bishops and archbishops, catholicos patriarch, (so) entrusted by the mercies of the Lord of all, along with the bishops who are with us, your brothers and friends of the great province of the apostolic, patriarchal, and paternal see in the cathedral church of Koke in Seleucia and Ctesiphon, in Christ the hope of our life, your Preserver from all harm, sends hearty greetings.

The blessed apostle Paul, he who was the student of the divine mysteries and the teacher and orderer of the bride of the heavenly Bridegroom, which is the holy church, taught us, saying, "To write to you the same things is not tedious to me."[2] Neither is it irksome to us to write and remind your love of those things which you well know {96} and are persuaded of, for through the grace of our Lord, all of you are trained of God, and in his foreknowledge were chosen and entrusted to be shepherds and heads of the flocks of the fold of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

The occasion that called on us at this time to compose writings to you and to prepare your love for the business of the community is this: in the year eight hundred and sixty-three of Alexander, the son of Philip, according to the reckoning of the Greeks[3], the leader who preceded us, our father and worthy of a good memorial, Mar 'Aba, passed from the world. Because of the duality which existed before his administration, after he had come to the leadership, through the jealousy of outsiders and from the accusation of insiders, he was delivered into bonds and various exiles, and occasion was again given to disorderly and tumultuous men to perfect the desire of their wickedness, to abuse virtuous order, to trample down the ecclesiastical canons, to contemn the divine commands, and to sow the tares of schisms and divisions, and raise up rebellions. They took upon themselves, by their own choice, to become strangers to all fear of God, and indeed, those who are called "of the household" brought execrable accusations before outsiders against the worthy of a good memorial, Mar 'Aba the catholicos, the leader before us, because he had rebuked them and had offered them reproof that they might turn from their customary evils, return to God, and offer penance, so that they might mercifully find favor and not die in their sins. But as much as the saint labored with them, they were stubborn and increased the heavy burdens of their debts, and he ended his days in bonds and received a recompense from God, the Lord of all, and became a virtuous example to all who fear the name of the Lord everywhere.

In the same year, eight hundred and sixty-three, in the month of 'Iyar[4], according to the sun, by the grace of God and the election and agreement of all the community, I, wretched and insignificant, was entrusted with the high priesthood of blessed memory of the kingdom of the Persians, of the region of the East, belonging to the holy church of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the royal cities. The bishops who were gathered offered a strong petition regarding this: that when the opportunity arose, the paternal canons should be renewed, and the ordinances, canons, and ecclesiastical traditions kept as before. But because the occasion did not offer an opportunity, we delayed at that time and did not write.

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[1] Ruled 552-567.
[2] Phil. 3:1.
[3] I.e., 552.
[4] I.e., May.

Again, in the year eight hundred and sixty four they gathered and once more offered petition concerning this, but affairs called and matters impeded us, and it seemed to us, generally, of no advantage to write unless first there was an end to all the affairs which hindered. Then, by the grace and mercies of God, when [there was] a good conclusion of all of these affairs, [once more, in the year eight hundred {97} and sixty-]five, in the month of Latter Kanon[1], the bishops gathered and offered a strong petition concerning this, greatly sorrowing and grieving unto death concerning the corruption and confusion which existed in the holy church in the eastern region, while offering supplication to all the community of their brother pastors, for the paternal canons by which the holy church, with all the orders and conditions in it, was nurtured and preserved in the love of God, by reason of the confusion which Satan had brought in through men who fulfill their own will, had grown old, and had wasted away and become absent from the heart of many, as though the canons had never existed or been decreed in the holy church.

And because we know that all of you pastors are prepared and ready, like valiant pilots and wise helmsmen — those who, through their diligence, knowledge, and wisdom, deliver their ships from the midst of the severe storms and mighty tempests which rise up against them in the churning and tossing sea, bringing their ships to the harbor of tranquillity, where there is a place of safe shelter — (we have written to you) to keep the ship of your souls as well, and of the souls which have been entrusted to you, from the tempests of the Accuser, which he has stirred up against the church through his counterfeit disciples, who because of self-love have buffeted Christianity through the trampling-down of canons and through the scorn of the observance of divine laws, and to guard your flocks and folds from those who are clothed with the garb of sheep, but within are ravenous and destroying wolves. Let us, we and you together, be prepared and ready to fulfill those things to which we have been summoned by the grace of the Holy Spirit. And the canons, which are high bulwarks and strongholds, protecting their observers from all harm, and (are) like lamps which give light to those who look for the light of Christ and those who wish to follow the path of the kingdom safely, following it, smooth and trodden, by means of the canons which were decreed by the ecumenical fathers, the three hundred and eighteen bishops, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, and also the one hundred and fifty who [gathered] in Constantinople, [and from all the paternal synodical laws . . . . . .][2] the same canons, which out of necessity have been forgotten in our times and in our days, we have renewed and are restoring in the holy synod of the blessed council — ours and yours — that by us and by you and by the whole community, with signatures and seals, and with decrees of the "Word of God", these canons, which are written in sequence below, may be confirmed.

While before everything we keep the correct confession of two natures in Christ, that is, his divinity and his humanity, and we preserve the properties {98} of the natures which are in them, putting away from the midst confusion and disturbance and alteration and change; and we also preserve the three-fold number of the qnome of the Trinity, and we acknowledge one steadfast and ineffable union in one true Son of one God, the Father of truth. And everyone who thinks or says "two Christs" or "two Sons", or on any pretext or in any way stirs up a "quaternity", the same we have anathematized and do anathematize, and he is reckoned by us as a member rejected from the whole body of Christianity. After these things we observe also all that pertains to a chaste and holy standing, and more than our own bodily life we observe the ecclesiastical canons with watchfulness. Everyone who transgresses against one of these canons written below is liable to the judgment which is decreed in each and every one of them.

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[1] I.e., January.

[2] There is a lacuna of 2 lines.

First Canon: It has been reported in the council that a certain person came and asked the holy Mar Yausep the catholicos to be ordained a presbyter for another province, and he was offered the explanation: "The canons do not authorize anyone to make priests in a jurisdiction which is not his own, especially one whom we do not know to be either worthy or unworthy." And he went and sought refuge among some outsiders among the nobles of the kingdom, and they also offered strong intercessions on his behalf, but because it was not right to accept the intercession, since a transgression of the canon would be served thereby, they[1] did not accept him. For this reason the impious one went and troubled those persons, and through his accusation the church of his village was torn down, and some there were bound as being new Christians[2], they and their parents, and those who did not endure apostatized. After much damage was done, the bishop of his diocese offered strong petitions to each one[3], that they might persuade him to stop accusing Christians, and that he would be made a presbyter. By this labor of wickedness that lawless man came to ordination to the priesthood, although from justice he received the punishment of his impiety.

It seemed good to us concerning this that hereafter, if there is a deacon, or a presbyter, or a bishop who seeks to seize for himself an important position by the patronage of outsiders and faithful laymen, he should be loosed and removed from the rank which he holds. Also the faithful, those who were his helpers, shall be proscribed from all ecclesiastical contact until they offer penance. If it is known that someone else desires to emulate these things or things such as these, and we plead with him to refrain from this work of wickedness, and he is not persuaded, (then) if he has received a rank, whatever it is, {99} he shall be stripped and deprived of it; and if he has not yet approached the priesthood, but from the beginning he desires to meditate wickedness, he shall be anathematized from all ecclesiastical fellowship and from contact with the faithful, he and those who are his helpers, if they are believers, until the fruits of repentance are seen in them.

Second Canon: It was reported that in a certain place there were two churches in a village, one which was called the "new" church, and another, the "old" church, and both of them clearly had a congregation, and in some matter the bishop wrote to the presbyters and faithful of the congregation of the "new" church, and those who are called of the "old" church received it and conveyed it to the Rad and publicized it to the Persians, and on the evidence of the bishop, who had testified that it was a "new" church, it was torn down, (the pupose being) that all the congregation might become one, that the religious[4] might fulfill their covetousness.

Therefore we have decreed by canon that, where there are two churches and two congregations, whoever becomes an accuser of his fellow in order to tear down a church and to draw a congregation not his[5] own after him[6], and to deliver his brother[7] priests into bonds for the spoiling of their property or for apostasy from Christianity, whoever does such shall be loosed and removed from all the ranks of the priesthood.

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[1] Presumably, the bishops, those in his own province, or the people of the town he sought ordination for.

[2] I.e., they had converted from Zoroastrianism.

[3] ܠܐܢܫ ܐܢܫ?, that is, presumably, to each one of the nobles, who in turn were to persuade the troublesome fellow.

[4] ܒܢ̈ܝ ܩܝܡܐ.

[5] Substituting ܕܝܠܗ for ܕܝܠܗܘܢ.

[6] ܒܬܪܗ for ܒܬܪܗܘܢ.

[7] ܠܐܚ̈ܝܗ for ܠܐܚ̈ܝܗܘܢ.

Third canon: Again, it was reported that even bishops seize thrones from one another through the patronage of believers and of outsiders, and also, without compulsion, of their own wills ordain priests in each other's jurisdiction.

Also, concerning this we have decreed by canon that they should persuade whoever seeks what is not his own that his own is sufficient. He must not wrong the spiritual wife which has been betrothed to him by the Lord. If, when they plead with him in love, he is not agreeable, let him be suspended. If, when he is suspended, he is disobedient, let him be dismissed and removed from all the ranks of the priesthood. Again, those who confound the canons and perform ordination in a jurisdiction not their own, the ordination shall be null and void. If there is no (reasonable) necessity, one which does not violate a canon, let the judgment be carried out as it is decreed.

Fourth canon: Again, it was reported that when a bishop departs in one of the dioceses, there are factions and parties, and everyone seeks to establish his own will, and because they are led by human passion after the impulse of their own minds, laymen gather and associate with themselves the religious, and without the bishops of the province and the whole community of clergy and faithful, they among themselves secretly hold an election of the person whom they desire. They swear oaths and establish covenants to the death not to forsake him. For this reason {100} corruption and much harm is generated in the community.

Because of this we have decreed that those who act this way are bound and anathematized from all fellowship in the Holy Mysteries and from contact with the faithful. The person they have agreed upon, even if he is unaware this had been done, if he eventually gives them his consent, shall also be proscribed from all ecclesiastical contact, as is due for his offense. However, if by his own incitement and undertaking he instigated them to do such a thing, and he does not turn from the impudent mind which remains in him, let him be dismissed and removed, and stripped of the rank in which he stands.

Fifth canon: It was reported in the council of bishops in the paternal synod[1] of the West that anathema was placed upon a bishop who migrates from see to see, and because this anathema was trampled underfoot and an entrance was opened for adultery in the holy church, wherever this was done it did not go well, but great corruptions, injuries, and harm sprang up from it.

As for us, in order that we might not fall under the anathema of the fathers which they decreed by canons, and that we might bar this fornication from the church of God, and that uncleanness might not be cultivated in the priesthood of Christ the Lord, we have decreed by heavenly authority that no one is allowed to give way to migrating from see to see. Even though one may be greatly pressed by insiders and outsiders, he should not accept their petition, but should hold fast to the keeping of the canons, which is the pure intimacy of the spiritual wife who has been given to him. Whoever ventures to transgress against this decree (shall be) dismissed and removed from all the ranks of the priesthood, and also proscribed from ecclesiastical contact, until he offers penance and it seems good to the council of bishops, and he is absolved for fellowship in the Holy Mysteries.

Sixth Canon: Again, it was reported that there are some bishops who, when there are councils of the community, do with a good will everything concerning themselves that has been told them by rulers and leaders. However, after a while some of them deny (their prior agreement, saying) "We did not (so) act", or some of them say, "We did (so) by way of force", and their words are found to be one thing, and their deeds another. Some of them have been advocates of passing judgment on wrongdoers, but when judgment is nearly completed, and punishment of their offense is proclaimed in writs at the council of the community, when all of the bishops give their agreement with their brothers, then they are against whatever the council of bishops has done.

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[1] Canon 15 of Nicea. See also Canons 18, 21, and 22 of Antioch, Canon 2 of Constantinople I, Canon 5 of Chalcedon, and Canon 14 of the Apostolic Canons.

Also, concerning such, we have decreed by canon that strong censure should be offered them by their brother bishops. If they do not abandon their customary ways, let them be proscribed from the ministry of their priesthood. If they still {101} remain in their impudence and do not obey the advice and command of their brothers, again let them be given a specified time (in which they are) proscribed by the "Word of God" from their ministry, and if their wound does not receive healing, let them be stripped and deprived of all the ranks of the priesthood.

Seventh canon: Again, it was reported that some who are entrusted with the rank of the great fatherhood, which is the patriarchate, carry out actions by themselves, privately, and they go about putting their seal (on them), and without showing them to the bishops or calling (them) before them, they require them to subscribe (to them) by force. If they do not (so) subscribe, they stir up pretexts against them, and anathematize them, and dismiss them from the episcopacy.

Also, for this reason, we have decreed that one (who is) metropolitan or patriarch should do whatever he does with the advice of the community; and the more bishops there are, the better is the examination (of the matter), and the more trustworthy is the action he carries out. But if there is a matter which is pressing, and there is no opportunity afforded to gather the bishops, or the haste of the matter does not allow for an extension of time — for if it is deferred until the bishops come there will be harm — because of this, out of necessity, nothing can be done by less than three bishops, for three bishops is considered a council of the community, according to the word of our Lord, who said, "Where two or three shall be gathered in my name, I will be there among them."[1] Whoever ventures to do otherwise is liable to the judgment and to the retribution which is judged appropriate by the community.

Eighth canon: Again, it was reported that presbyters and abbots, without permission of the bishop, leave their positions and go to others because they are more prosperous than the previous ones, for they find them flourishing in their inhabitants, but in a short time they ravage them and leave for others.

Concerning these, we have decreed by canon that they should never again be entrusted with the headship of churches or monasteries, and everything which is found with them belonging to the churches and monasteries should be restored to its place. The bishop of the diocese should issue due warnings about them, and if there is anything else that is proper to do to them as punishment for their offense, it is left up to his discretion.

Ninth canon: Again, it was reported that there are certain presbyters who have labored in offenses and have been blamed by insiders and outsiders, and though they have not manifested repentance with a good will, but in appearance, outwardly, because of necessity, and also leaders, again, for reasons surpassing speech, have given them permission, {102} through kindness, to (continue to) minister in their positions. Then, since they mercifully have found favor, they obtain the patronage of insiders and outsiders and attain to the episcopacy, and because they themselves had been found blameworthy and culpable in the past, they are not able to blame or condemn others in whom blame (actually) has been found.

Also, concerning such we have decreed by canon that one who, while being a teacher of others, transgresses against the canons and does something alien to the Christian life-style, even if he mercifully finds favor and is left in his previous position, yet to the position of fatherhood, which is the episcopacy, he may not apply himself. Those who transgress against these things (shall be) bound and anathematized from the ministry of their priesthood until they offer penance according to whatever is decreed concerning them by the community of bishops. But he who has applied himself shall be dismissed and removed from the rank which he has received.

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[1] Mt. 18:20.

Tenth canon: Again, it was reported that presbyters, deacons, and religious go and marry pagan women and some of them are converted. They beget children by them, and after a while, when the Magians hear about them[1], they are captured and bound and repudiate[2] Christianity, and some presbyters and deacons are found blameworthy through their unbelieving children.

Also, concerning this we have decreed by canon that those who act in such a way may not again be trusted to minister the priesthood.

Eleventh canon: Again, it was reported that there are some bishops and presbyters who, because they are entrusted with deeds of properties of churches and monasteries, devise schemes and register them in their own names, and they bequeath them to their sons and daughters. Sometimes, when pagans go in to their wives[3] and daughters and (so) take possession of the properties of churches and monasteries, not only does it go out[4] from the churches and monasteries, but from the whole Christian community.

Also, concerning these things we have decreed by canon that those who are entrusted with the community are not allowed to make a will without the advice (of) the council of the community. If they secretly make a will it shall be dismissed and voided by ecclesiastical judgment.

Twelfth canon: Again, it has been reported that there are certain bishops, presbyters, deacons, religious, and faithful who, when they are proscribed by the "Word of God" from the ministry of the priesthood, from the reception of the Holy Mysteries, and from contact with the faithful because of their offense, some are (at first) acquiescent, but (later) they go to seek refuge among outsiders that they might be re-admitted by force, though they have not yet corrected their offenses. If there is anyone who resists them that the canons may be observed, those persons, because of the worldly influence which {103} they have, make them to endure much distress through tasks (imposed by) the king and through worldly impositions[5] and through one thing and another. And there are others who do not accept their suspension, and they rise up in revolts, and gather contentious men with them, and make them a party so as to withdraw from the bishop of their diocese and elect another in his place who (will) do their will.

Also, concerning these we have decreed by canon that they shall be proscribed for a specified period from all ecclesiastical contact, and if they are conscious of their offense and offer repentance, they shall be re-admitted. If, on the other hand, they persist in their impudence, and while opportunity is given them for repentance they generate tumult and strife, and are not persuaded to take pity upon their souls and receive healing in themselves through the re-admission and pardon of the community, they are also, if they are priests, loosed and removed from their ministry and proscribed from contact with the faithful, and if believers, they are proscribed from all ecclesiastical contact. But if they turn back, they should be allowed to receive the Holy Mysteries.

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[1] I.e., the women.

[2] Since all these verbs are masculine, they refer to the "children", not "women".

[3] I.e., they subsequently re-marry.

[4] The verb is singular and its antecedent uncertain to me. Probably the properties.

[5] Sense unclear.

Thirteenth canon: Again, it was reported that there are certain culpable laymen who, because they have committed a transgression of a canon, are not even worthy of the ecclesiastical "peace", yet whenever there is a council they come and sit in the chief seats, and though they are not faithful in the ways of Christianity, they become judges of the religious and deacons and presbyters, and even of the bishops, and their own offenses they do not even recall.

Also, concerning these we have decreed by canon that not only may they not enter the council of the community where there is a head, but also they should not be deemed worthy to be given a seat in the council of the community for any business. If a matter is urgent and they are required, they should stand upon their feet as wrong-doers, and if they wish to be judges, first let them judge themselves, then they may judge those who are better than they, and we have decreed with anathema[1] that no one is allowed to do otherwise.

Fourteenth canon: This also was reported: when the father of fathers, who is the patriarch, departs, inasmuch as he who is chosen for the high fatherhood of the priesthood is elected with the agreement of the whole community, it is right that all the metropolitans, whether by writings or by the laying-on of hands, should take part in the agreement if it is a time of tranquillity and there is no dread or fear which hinders the matter. But if it happens (to be) a disorderly and confused time, and there is vexation for Christianity from outsiders, (then) hastily, with the agreement of two metropolitans, let them make a head and leader for the community, that distress and persecution might not increase for Christianity from those who oppose them, and that {104} the factious, those who in name are called "Christians", might not discover an opportunity to manufacture divisions and schisms, inasmuch as, indeed, at times, such things have been done.

Because of this we have decreed that when, with a good will and a just intention, which is far from respect of persons and human passions, the clergy and faithful of the two cities, that is, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, elect a head, with the bishops of the province of the see and with the agreement of two metropolitans, (then) all the provinces with a good will should also joyfully accept him who has been given charge over them as head and leader by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and they, like true disciples, ought to render to him the honor which is due from children with veneration. With writings they should honor the spiritual father who is patriarch, and he, in turn, should in like manner honor all his brothers and fellow bishops. If it happens that one of the provinces should be contrary, a severe and bitter punishment should be passed upon it by all the provinces, for if they stretch out the hand against the head in their audacity, also those beneath them will be emboldened to stretch out their hands.

Fifteenth canon: Again, it was reported that inasmuch as the catholicos, when he has no ratification or ordination of the metropolitans, ought not to be called "patriarch", so too a metropolitan, when he has no ratification or ordination of the patriarch, ought not to be called "metropolitan". If, on the other hand, when there is ratification, it is not according to the commands which were written down by common consent, but is something which has been done alien to the canon, custom, order, and ecclesiastical tradition, we have decreed by the "Word of God" that whether he is a patriarch or a metropolitan or a bishop, he is dismissed and removed from all the ranks of the priesthood.

Sixteenth canon: It was reported in the council that whenever, for whatever reason, the bishops of one of the provinces are gathered with the head of the province — because of an inquiry into ecclesiastical matters or for passing judgment on someone who impudently does something alien to the ecclesiastical canons or the common custom of Christianity — one of the bishops, when he is bidden, delays, does not come, and does not send agreement, or, being present, leaves and departs and does not give agreement to whatever his brother bishops of the province have done.

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[1] For ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ.

Concerning this (bishop) we have decreed by the "Word of God" that, as he has contemned the community of provincial bishops and scorned by his impudence whatever the whole community of the province does, hereafter he should no longer be believed to be worthy of the calling of the affairs of the community, especially of the archbishop and bishops of the province. {105} He should be proscribed from every ministry of the priesthood. But if he is sorry and pours out his soul in repentance, and is conscious of his offense and offers petition to all the bishops of the province to become advocates on his behalf with the archbishop of the province, and he subscribes a judgment recalling all his offense in writing and makes agreement to leave his customary ways, and if he returns, attesting concerning himself that he is dismissed and removed from all the ranks of the priesthood, then he may be accepted in mercy through the pardon of the community.

Seventeenth canon: It was said in the council of bishops (concerning) those occupied in the sin of fornication (that) judgment should be rendered to each rank in its order — not indiscreetly or, as it may happen, each one judging community affairs according to his own will — and there should be no confusion of the canons.

Concerning this we have decreed, by the "Word of God", that if they are laymen who commit fornication, they shall be proscribed from all ecclesiastical contact. If they are sensible of their offense and offer repentance with a good will while sorrowing, the canons should pass judgment concerning them, each one according to his condition and as is fit. When he fulfills his canonical penalty, then, through pardon, he should be allowed to apply himself to ecclesiastical fellowship. If he is a religious, his sentence should be one year in fasting and prayer, and when he completes his canonical penalty, he too shall be allowed to apply himself to ecclesiastical fellowship. If he is a deacon, (his penalty should be) three years, and if a presbyter who does not have a wife, seven years. If he is a presbyter who has a wife, he shall no (longer) be trusted to minister the priesthood, and so too a bishop, according to the command of the paternal synod. No one is allowed to do otherwise.

Eighteenth canon: Again, it was reported in the synod of bishops that in any province whatsoever, whether (it concerns) a patriarch or metropolitan, (if) by reason of its expanse and the breadth of its jurisdiction, and also the distance and remoteness of the place, affairs call which are disadvantageous to ecclesiastical administration, and it seems good to the head of the province, and a new episcopal see is established, and villages are given to its jurisdiction from the jurisdiction of other sees nearby — from[1] those who were its founders — no one is allowed[2] to make it null and void. If there are some bishops who, for the sake of the preservation of previous boundaries[3], do not wish for there to be a see, that it might not be carved out of their jurisdiction and added to one newly {106} made, they (shall be) bound and anathematized from the ministry of their priesthood until they repent for what they have said and sought to do, for it is proper for the true pastors who are entrusted with the rational sheep of Christ to supplicate and beseech God at all seasons and times, that their flocks may be kept from all harm, and that there might be addition to the size of the flocks, that it[4] might grow and flourish, and that by their agency pastors might be added like them, that they might cry out to the Chief Shepherd on the day of resurrection, "Our Lord, you gave us each five talents, and behold, we have each earned five in addition to them"[1], that it might also be said to them, "Well done, O good and faithful servants, for you were entrusted with a little and it has greatly increased in your hands. Enter the joy of your Lord."[2]

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[1] Or, "apart from . . ., no one . . ."

[2] ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܐܢܫ for ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܐܢܐ.

[3] ܬܚ̈ܘܡܐ for ܬܘ̈ܚܡܐ.

[4] I.e., the size, presumably, since the pronoun is singular.

Nineteenth canon: Again, it was reported that some who have been deemed worthy of the gift of the Holy Spirit through holy baptism, and have been given fellowship in the Holy Mysteries, and have become trusted members of the household in the Christian brotherhood, and have been instructed through the reading of the Holy Scriptures, willfully give themselves over to the service of demons, or to the strange speech of incantations, or to spells, or amulets, or divinations, or omens, or to saying that there are fortunes, or fates, or signs of the Zodiac, or to observing times and seasons to conduct their affairs.

When any of those who have fallen into this great malady should return, healing should be offered him as though for a bodily illness with the oil of prayer which the priests bless, and with the water of prayer, and with fasting, prayer, watchfulness, and continual vigil until the dark cloud of alien dust that has settled upon him is dispelled from his mind, while with these things admonition, instruction, exhortation, and reproof should be offered to him at every moment, adding to them consolation, encouragement, hope, and forgiveness, for by this his repentance is capable of being ascertained and made known. Then, little by little, he should be given fellowship in each one of the meetings, though not immediately the Holy Mysteries. But if he is a priest he is not to be trusted again to minister the priesthood.

Twentieth canon: It has been decreed by others that monasteries and martyria should not be built in a city or in a suburb of a city, and it was said in the council of bishops that this attitude is contrary to Christianity. Indeed, pagans and Jews are pleased with this, for Christianity cannot flourish or the glory of God increase. But we, according to the commands of the holy writings and according to {107} the tradition and custom which has continued in the holy church from the blessed apostles until today, ought so[3] to flourish, so that churches and monasteries and temples and martyria should be built in cities and in the suburbs of cities. But the oblation should not be offered in them, and baptism should not be given in them, except with the permission of the bishops on designated days. But the remainder of all days they should be continually giving and receiving the oblation from the cathedral church.

Twenty-first canon: It was reported in the council of bishops of all the provinces that all the honor of each one of the provinces, insofar as it is more lofty than its fellow, should be observed. No one is allowed to introduce confusion or trouble into the midst, in order to honor one or to detract from another, but also all of them in succession, one after another — everything that belongs to each one of them — should be completely observed according to the commands of the holy writings, according to the canon of the paternal synod, and according to the custom and tradition which continues and proceeds in the holy church of the western region and in all regions where Christianity flourishes and the canons are observed; for thus it is right for the church, the glorious bride who has been adorned with all beauty in her station, so that all her onlookers might glorify God, the Lord of all, in her. Anyone who dares to contend against these things shall be dismissed and removed from every rank in which he stands. At the same time, it seemed good to the patriarch and the council of his brother bishops, that this also should be observed according to the tradition and paternal custom in the eastern region as (it has been) heretofore: when he who is patriarch departs, he who is entrusted with the episcopacy of Kaškar, when he becomes aware of this or they inform him in writing, should make his journey without delay to the royal cities, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and on his own initiative— (something) incumbent upon him more than his colleagues, the bishops of the province of the patriarchal see, as one who is second and protector of the patriarchal see — should compose writings to the metropolitans and bishops, his brothers, that they should make their journey, so that through their mediation the election and consecration of the one who is (to be) chosen for the patriarchate might be fulfilled. But if, when he becomes aware of the matter, or it is written (about) to him, he delays and does not come during the time appointed him, and when it is investigated in the council it appears that there was no pressing reason hindering, it seemed good to the synod of bishops that he should be suspended from the entire ministry of his priesthood until he comes and, according to what is due to his offense, receives correction in the council. Never again should he be entrusted with {108} this honor, but let him be last of all, for the honor rendered to him by the community he did not consider an honor.

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[1] Cf. Mt. 25:20.

[2] Cf. Mt. 25:21.

[3] ܗܒܢܐ for ܗܟܢܐ.

Twenty-second canon: Again, it was the will of the synod of bishops that the paternal canons which were renewed by the undertaking of the worthy of a good memorial, Mar 'Aba the catholicos, should be observed with diligence. Whoever transgresses against them shall receive the punishment of his offense, according to whatever seems good to the common council of the bishops.

Twenty-third canon: Again, it was the will of the council of bishops that when a deacon is suspended by a presbyter, or a presbyter is suspended by his visitor, or a visitor by a chorepiscopus, or a chorepiscopus by a bishop, or a bishop by a metropolitan, or a metropolitan by the patriarch, even if it is claimed that he who is suspended was suspended improperly, nevertheless the suspension should be observed with diligence. He who is suspended should remain in his binding and seek judgment in the council of the community before those who are higher in rank than the one who bound and the one bound. When there is an examination in the council, let their judgment reach a conclusion in accordance with that which propriety demands[1].

This synod has been confirmed with the signature and seals of the holy God-loving:
Mar Yausep, bishop catholicos.
Mar Šem'on, bishop metropolitan of Beit Huzaye.
Mar Paulos, bishop metropolitan of Nisibis.
Mar Mšabḥa, bishop metropolitan of Ḥdayab.
Mar Qaldina, bishop metropolitan of the new Maḥoza.

and of:
Šubḥalmaran, bishop of Kaškar.
Šem'on, bishop of Piroz-Šabur.
'Aqaq, bishop of Beit Madaye.
Yoḥanan, bishop of Beit Daraye.
Barnun, bishop of Karme.
Denḥa, bishop of Masbdan.
'Abraham, bishop of Isfahan.
{109} Yazdgard, bishop of Balad.
Yazidpaneh, bishop of Ma'alta.
'Aḥudemeh, bishop of Nineveh.
Narsa, bishop of the villages of 'Ariwan.
Ṭahmin, bishop of Sirzor.

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[1] ?for ܐܝܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܦܘܪܣܐ ܘܠܝܬܐ.

Yoḥanan, bishop of 'Aborad and Šahar-Piroz.

and those who consented by their letters and seals,
Mar Dawid, bishop metropolitan of Marw.
Posai, bishop of Ḥalwan.
Surin, bishop of Karka dLedan.
Šila, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir.
'Eliša', bishop of Šoštere.
Kosrau, bishop of Šuš.
Barṣauma, bishop of Qardo.
Natom, bishop of 'Arzon dBet 'Austan.
Daniyel, bishop of Raziqaye.
Ya'qob, bishop of Paidangaran.
'Auban, bishop of 'Ahmadan.
Sargis, bishop of Rima.
Barnai, bishop of Karme[1]
Malkizdeq, bishop of Azerbaijan.
Gabril, bishop of Ḥarbgelal.
Teadora, bishop of Marmarod.
Surin, bishop of Amol and Gilan.

And at the last came the agreement of Alahzka, metropolitan of Beit Garmai.

Because the agreement of Mar Yoḥanan, metropolitan of Prat dMaišan, was slow in coming, his place was reserved for him in the third rank. The first metropolis (is that) of Beit Huzaye; second, of Nisibis; third, of Prat; fourth, of Ḥdayab; fifth, of Beit Garmai; sixth, of Rew-'Ardašir; seventh, of Marw; and at the head of all of them, the patriarch who occupies the catholical see of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, {110} who is the father and head of all the metropolitans through the begetting of his ordination and his permission, and any metropolitan ordained without him shall be completely null and void.

The synod of Mar Yausep the Catholicos is ended.

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[1] But see above.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR ḤAZQIEL

576 AD)

Again, the synod of Mar Ḥazqiel[1] the catholicos.

(This synod took place) in the month of Šbaṭ[2], in the forty-fifth year of the accession of our merciful, beneficent, gentle, and mild lord, Kosrau the victorious, the King of Kings — may his kingdom for ever be for the benefit of all the world — during the administration of the venerable, holy, and elect of God, the father of fathers and chief shepherd, our father Mar Ḥazqiel, catholicos patriarch. At this time we metropolitans and bishops, by the grace of God, gathered: Dalai, bishop metropolitan of Beit Huzaye, Šem‘on, bishop metropolitan of Prat dMaišan, Ḥnana, metropolitan of 'Arbil and of all the land of Ḥdayab, Mari, bishop of Kaškar, Muše, bishop of Karka dLedan, Baršabta, bishop of Šharqart, Dawid, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir, Saba, bishop of Lašom, Babai, bishop of Zabe, Daniyel, bishop of Šoštere, Qamišo‘, bishop of Beit Dasen, Šmuel, bishop of the towns of 'Ariwan, Mari, bishop of Piroz-Šabur, 'Ador-Hormizd, bishop of Šuš, Baršabta, bishop of Ma‘alta, Ḥnana, bishop of Ḥarbgelal, 'Ahron, bishop of Isfahan, Šmuel, bishop of Barḥis, Šubḥališo‘, bishop of Taḥal, Papa, bishop of Mihrgaqdag, Malkizdeq, bishop of Azerbaijan, Šubḥa, bishop of Balašpar, Z‘ora, bishop of Gorgan, Kormeh, bishop of Segistan, Yoḥanan, bishop of Šenna, Šubḥa, bishop of Sabran, Mihr-Šabur, bishop of Ram-Hormizd, Yazid-'Apneh, bishop of Nineveh, Šmuel, bishop of Marwan, and Barsahde, bishop of ‘Ain Sapane.

(We came) {111} for the sight and veneration of the father of fathers, Mar Patriarch, the same who had previously come to us through his "peace", and to whose noble presence we came in the company of his "peace" for the peace and tranquillity of the church, the same which had been betrothed in peace by her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This pledge he left her through his trustworthy stewards, the holy apostles, that she too, in the company of her peace, might journey with his peace: "I leave you peace. I give you my peace.[3] My peace has no equal in the world. My peace leads up to the exalted height. My peace confers new wings upon the burdened in body and slow in step, that they may soar and fly and be lifted up to the habitation in which I dwell. My peace makes radiant and joyful, cleansing away the impurity of sin, so that there may be a dwelling-place appropriate to its own ways and manners."

This messenger, fully adorned with heavenly clothing, girded with ineffable beauties, was sent to us by the fatherhood of the father of fathers, Mar Patriarch, with whom we made our coming, exulting and rejoicing with gladness of mind and merriment of heart, that by our coming together and traveling with one another we might even more delight in his[4] good things and take sweet tastes of his pleasantness. This one who newly sprang up, sprouted, and rose up before us so as to entice us, that we too might become his newly made recipients, and by his mediation our Christian feast might be crowned and adorned, this peace, then, full of all benefits and adorned with all beauties, by reason of the operation of Satan, the enemy of our nature who ever endeavors and strives for our destruction, had previously departed from the church in this exalted region of the East and had gone up to dwell in the height of his dominion; thenceforth the darkness of enmity, demonstrated in hostile fashion its violence, and, in the darkness of his eyes (Satan) poured out (all) that belongs to him, like a violent hailstorm, upon her[5]: divisions and strife were set into motion, and tumults and conflicts were incited. Gloomy darkness and night spread over all and the mighty noon-day was stricken. Troubling dark clouds surrounded her on all sides, and fearful news and terrifying reports beat down upon her like a torrent of rain, continually battering her, as it were, with stones, that they might cause her desirable fruits and beloved offspring to fall from her and become corrupt.

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[1] Ruled 570-581.

[2] I.e., February.

[3] Cf. Jn. 14:27.

[4] I.e., the messenger, "peace".

[5] That is, the church.

But while she was in peril such as this, and was buffeted by vexations and adversities, and was moved and shaken by the mighty winds which came upon her, so that every man was sinking, as though thrown down into an overwhelming whirlpool, and she was lamenting and weeping for herself — at the very time her finest members were at the point of being cut off and scattered at one another's hands, {112} and of becoming as though they had never existed — Christ her Bridegroom did not continue to ignore the adorned bride, that she should be left any longer in torment and sorrow such as this, but he remembered his promise to her and recalled the pledge which he gave her, which through the machinations and wiles of Satan had departed and flown away from her. He removed the dark night which held her, and dispersed the darkness of adversities which was spread out over her, and calmed the engulfing waves which raged against her, and quieted the overwhelming flood which had come upon her and beat upon her for her downfall. He lifted up her bent head through a new way-farer, whom he summoned and raised up at her head, with the result that by his mediation on her behalf peace again returned to her and was granted to her, the father of fathers and chief shepherd, Mar Ḥazqiel the catholicos patriarch. Through him the blessed and cheerful morning sprang forth, and the clear sky, and the shining day, and it spread out over all the glorious children of the holy church. And lo, she exulted and thundered in praise with sweet voices in unceasing thanksgivings, while, as it were, clapping and shouting, "'My heart has grown strong in the Lord, and my horn has been exalted. My mouth is opened against my adversaries, for you have made me glad with your salvation'[1], through the mediation of the venerable high priest whom you raised up at the head of my children, the father of fathers, Mar Patriarch." This second David, by his election and in his ways, was tried and proven by the rational flock of the Lord of shepherds, Jesus Christ, that he might give pasture in the sweet meadows by his wholesome teaching, and give the living waters of his pleasant words to drink, which issue from the fountain of his holy lips, as for the nurturing and increase of the health of the flock, and for the destruction and dispersion of the cunning wolves which thirst for its rending, and might lead, guide, support, and bring it up to the house of its Lord, that it might hear his voice and be sheltered in the sheepfold of his kingdom, and receive the ineffable delights of its Lord, the heavenly King of Kings, Jesus Christ its Savior. Through his love toward us we all gathered and came for the sight of the great shepherd whom he established at the head of his flock, Mar Patriarch.

Beginning with great joy, we recalled the teachings and canons which were established in the holy church by the holy apostles and blessed fathers, and asked that they be renewed by the administration and leadership of his fatherhood, and that those be set forth which it was urgent that the children of the holy church give heed to and learn, in order that their ways and their affairs might be adapted to the command and regulation of the canons, that by them they might gain confidence for their souls on the day in which thoughts are tested and {113} consciences revealed, so that they may come to hear the words full of hope and love, "Come, blessed of my father, and inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from before the foundations of the world."[2] The fatherhood of Mar Patriarch applauded this intention which we had, and he spoke to us in accordance with the greatness of his knowledge and his exalted teaching, and he taught and revealed those things which are profitable to men if they continually meditate upon them. Indeed, such things as should be perfected and fulfilled for the reformation of the church he committed to our beloved son of the community, his notary, the presbyter Yoḥanan.

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[1] 1 Sam. 2:1.

[2] Mt. 25:34.

We offered the worship of confession and thanksgiving to God, the Lord of all lords, the same whose nature is high and lifted up and glorious above all our praises and hymns. (He is) the everlasting Being who alone truly exists eternally and ineffably, hidden, incomprehensible, infinite, without beginning and without end, ruling over all, Fashioner of all creatures, remote from all changes and alterations, distant from all passions and impulses, in whom everything exists. He is beyond all and within all in the glory of his majesty, and by his authoritative command and by the might of his power he holds, governs, administers, and provides for all. (He is) Giver of the Old (Covenant) and Perfecter of the New, who through his holy prophets taught the ancients concerning the oneness of his nature, and by hints and signs revealed the glorious qnome of his Trinity.

In the last days, according to the saying of the universal apostle, the elect Paul, he was revealed to us and spoke with us in his Son, Christ our Lord, by whom the glorious qnome of his Father and of himself and of the Holy Spirit were newly made known, when he taught and commanded his holy apostles, his trustworthy preachers, "Go, make disciples of all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And when they are begotten by baptism, give them the nourishment which is suitable to their needs — the teaching and commandments and admonitions which I have set forth for you — that they may keep them and meditate upon them, for by them they will be able to enter and take delight in the Kingdom of Heaven; and lo, I am with you always, until the end of the world. Amen."[1]

The same who descended by his own choice for the salvation of our nature, which had grown old and worn out by the effects of sin, took for himself, inseparably, a complete temple for the dwelling-place of his divinity from the holy virgin Mary, and was conceived and born from her by the power of the Most High — Christ in the flesh, who is known and confessed in two natures, God and man: one Son. By him the senescence of our nature was made new, and in the vestment of his humanity the debt of our race was recompensed by his drawing nigh to the suffering and death of the cross. By the power of his divinity he rose from the dead after three days, as he had told the Jews, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."[2] And when {114} the Evangelist interpreted it, he said, "But he spoke concerning the temple of his body."[3] By his resurrection he broke the bars of death, overthrew the bulwarks of Sheol, nullified the power of sin, and brought low the pride of Satan, he who roared vehemently for the destruction of our nature. He gave a good hope and earnest of the resurrection from the dead to the whole world through his own resurrection and his going about with his disciples until the time of his ascension, and by the resurrection of those dead whom he quickened at his death, who became the first proclaimers of his resurrection. After he assured his disciples concerning his resurrection during the space of forty days, and promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit which they would receive, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for his promise, as well as that of his Father, in the communication and descent of the Holy Spirit upon them. Then, while they were looking at him, he was taken up, and a cloud received him and he was hidden from their sight. Subsequently holy angels were sent to them for their comfort, and spoke with them, saying, "Galilean men, why do you stand looking at the heavens? This Jesus who was taken up from you to Heaven will come in the same way as you have seen him going up to Heaven,"[4] for he is going to come at the end of the world to quicken the dead, to obliterate death and sin, to bring trial and judgment upon the whole creation, and to set apart the righteous for the delight of resurrection to the Kingdom of Heaven, and the wicked for resurrection to torment in Gehenna.

This, then, is the true faith in the three qnome of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — one glorious and true nature — which renounces, rejects, and excommunicates all the contentious companies of the followers of Mani, Marcion, Bardaisan, and the rest of their fellow heretics. By it all the sects of the followers of Arius, Eunomius, and Apollinaris, along with the rest of the heretical adherents of their party — the blasphemers of the Father, those who impute suffering to the divinity of the Son, those who drive away[1] the Holy Spirit, and those who introduce confusion into the unity of the Holy Trinity — are alienated, expelled, and rejected.

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[1] Cf. Mt. 28:19.20.
[2] Jn. 2:19.
[3] Jn. 2:21.
[4] Acts 1:11.

To this glorious and exalted nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we offered worship, and (now) do (so) offer, who cheered us by his grace through the mediation of the shepherd and chief of shepherds whom he raised up at our head, and in our cheerfulness we joined to establish and to renew the canons which were set forth by the holy fathers — those which, because of the negligence which had entered into the church, had also been scorned — and began to reform and order them from that time forth.

Because Satan, the enemy of our nature, is continually desirous, through his subtleties and wiles, of spreading out his snares and capturing men for the destruction of their souls, so that some of them may render service to him and he may be acknowledged by them — indeed others, because of this, may be carried away (so as) {115} to follow them and have fellowship with them in their companionship with Satan — (therefore,) for the sake of all the children of the holy church, that they may observe and heed the commandments and divine laws, and that their sight may be fixed upon them, and the course of their affairs might be in accord with them, it is indeed especially incumbent upon the bishops and leaders that they become even more diligent in attending to the flock, that it might not fall into the hands of ravenous wolves, lest they rend it in pieces, and they thereafter become liable for the punishment of the Lord of the flock because they were not able to give account rightly. For our Lord and Savior, Christ, when he was tested by the bitter intention of the adversary of our humanity, commanded Simon, the head of the apostles, saying to him, "Simon, lo, Satan seeks to sift you like wheat, but I have petitioned on your behalf that your faith may not fail." Then what does he say? "But you, when you return, strengthen your brothers."[2] The leaders are obliged to show this diligence, care, and watchfulness toward their flocks, so that there may not be an opportunity for thieves to corrupt the minds of the faithful and to snatch from them the truth of their faith.

First chapter: concerning the Messalians: It was reported in the synod that there are some who clothe themselves in the false garb of mourners and ascetics, and they corrupt the minds of believers and lead away women who are steeped in sins. They venture to say that there is no sin in things done improperly, and completely do away with what is due, despising the oblation, fasting, and prayer, and all things by which God is reconciled to sinners. Through their arguments they declare that there is no reward for the good and no punishment for the wicked, and they go about in this audacity, for which there is no like. Sometimes (they turn) men from their wives and wives from their husbands; or they beguile and capture the mind of those who are widows, who have in them the fervor of youthful vigor, or betrothed virgins, or those who are not yet betrothed, and make them go round with them for the fulfillment of their uncleanness and great lasciviousness. Openly they rise up against the Holy Spirit, the Author of laws, and they wage their warfare with him and engage in these great atrocities and powerful wickednesses.

The synod has decreed and defined concerning these and their like that if there are some who have received the ranks of the priesthood and are in the ministry of the holy Church, they shall be completely cast out and alienated from every holy order of the ministry of the holy Church and from all contact with believers. They shall be given a period of one complete year for their repentance in order to be given fellowship in the holy Mysteries and join with {116} the faithful. However, they shall not be allowed to be entrusted with ecclesiastical ranks again. If (it is) the religious or faithful laymen who perform this impure thing, they shall be given a period of six months for their repentance and then given participation with the faithful.

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[1] ?ܡܥܒܪ̈ܢܝܢ. Upset?

[2] Lk. 22:31-32.

Second: concerning those who make themselves eunuchs: If they have mutilated their members prior to applying themselves to the ranks of the Church, they may not at all apply themselves to the ranks of the Church unless they remain in sorrow and remorse for a specified period. Then they may be given fellowship in the life-giving Mysteries of our Savior. However, if they mutilated their members after they accepted ecclesiastical ranks, they shall be completely removed from their ranks, and then they shall be given fellowship in the sacrament as ordinary men. But if (they are) those to whom this was done either by enemies, or by accidents, or by injuries which happened to them, and (it was) not by their own choice, these ought to be considered as guiltless. It is right for them to apply themselves to the ranks of the ministry if in other things their manners are in good order and there are good testimonies concerning them.

Third: concerning those who, though they are in name believers, yet are found by their actions to be contrary to the fear of God: If it happens that certain things are lost or actually stolen from them, they go to wizards and soothsayers so that they might uncover and divine (what was lost) for them, or they bring them to their houses, or they do other things in the name of purification — sprinkling water or something else by way of a demonic rite — so that those who serve demons might instruct them, and hang upon them amulets, knots, and charms. They are not terrified of the just retribution of Christ, and do not stand in awe of, or tremble at, the word of the Lord, which stipulates separation and expulsion from fellowship with such[1], saying, "The table of the Lord has no fellowship with the table of demons."[2] These same, when they go out from being with demonic rituals, make bold to come and enter the Church, and they stretch out their hands to draw near and take the absolving Mysteries of the body and blood of Christ, which become for them the condemnation of their souls and their own destruction, and bring upon them the harsh wrath of God.

Concerning these and their like the synod decreed that if some who have received ecclesiastical ranks are found to be guilty in these things, they shall be cast out of their ranks, and if some of the laity are found to do these things, they are to remain outside of the Church in sorrow and remorse for a specified period. When they are finished, they shall be received into the Church.

{117} Fourth: It was reported in the synod that there are some who, because they are not instructed in the divine dispensation and do not know the power of the true faith, resemble pagans in their deeds, who are completely alienated from the true hope of the fear of God, and when they have departed ones, they strike themselves and become wild. Their women especially cut their hair and rend their garments, and they behave with wailing, lamentation, the beating of drums, chants, and the cutting down of trees, and remain in much mourning, doing that which is far from the order of Christianity, while also lay people who lack the knowledge of God agree with them in these things.

Concerning these things the synod judged it right that on the day of their distresses they should sit in stillness and in composure, either in churches, or in monasteries, or in their own homes, as the regional custom may be and as is fitting for true believers who retain the hope of the resurrection. In this way their deeds may be shown before all men, and they will gain consolation for themselves from whatever is said to them by the teachers and priests and true believers.

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[1] I.e., with magic.

[2] Cf. 1 Cor. 10:21.

Fifth: It was reported in the synod that there are some who are banned from the Church because of disobedience in decorum, and seeking to remain in their contentiousness and wrongheadedness, they go and seek refuge among pagans or the laity, and they harass those who anathematized them, seeking re-admission[1] though they have not yet come to what is proper.

Also, concerning these the synod decreed that when they are obedient and come to what is proper, and remain also outside the Church in sorrow and remorse for a specified period, then they may be pardoned.

Sixth: It was reported in the synod that much carelessness has entered into the Church through the hands of impudent men and those who are contentious over the "Word of God[2]," which is the armor of the Church and the bulwark of Christianity. It has been trampled underfoot and despised by many, by priests and laymen alike. Those who are banned from the Church because of their transgression do not observe the anathema, and others again do not avoid them, (the aim being) that through this means they[3] might hasten and come to their own benefit. But as long as those who are not banned are equally joined with those who are banned, they remain in their impudence, and those who have joined with them have also become liable for the sentence of justice.

Concerning those who are suspended, the synod has adjudged that if they are priests who have been convicted of a transgression against the "Word of God", and once and again a reproof has been offered to them, and they are prevailed upon to come to what is proper and to correct their deeds, but {118} they remain in their impudence and stubbornness, they shall be completely cast out of their ranks, and shall remain outside the Church for a specified period in sorrow and remorse, for they regarded the divine "Word" in an ordinary way. Then they may be allowed to re-enter (the Church) as ordinary men. If there are laymen who were suspended and did not observe their suspension, and others came and knowingly had fellowship with them in their suspension, they too shall be suspended from the Church. When both parties come to what is proper, they shall remain outside the Church in sorrow and remorse for their transgression for a specified period, and then they may be pardoned. Again, if there are those who have been suspended, but say, "Our suspension is not proper," let them observe their suspension carefully until they can voice their contention before one who is authorized to judge the one who suspended them. If it is made known that they were improperly suspended, if it was a presbyter who was suspended he should be loosed by his bishop, and if he was a bishop, he should be loosed by his metropolitan and the bishops of his province. If he was a metropolitan, he should be loosed by the patriarch.

Seventh: Concerning the taking of women[4] illegally, the synod adjudged that, according to the canons concerning this composed by the early fathers, just so should it be carefully observed, none of the faithful scorning it.

Eighth: It was reported in the synod that there are some who are carried off by the turbulence of their lusts, and whatever has been set forth in an orderly way by God for the sake of happiness and the common benefit they perform in a disorderly and tumultuous way. They seize women so as to hold them as their wives, and often there are great injuries, blows, and conflicts, so that many of them result in death.

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[1] ? for ܦܢܝܘܬܐ.

[2] I.e., the typical formulation of an anathema.

[3] I.e., the anathematized.

[4] I.e., in marriage.

Concerning these things the synod decreed that henceforth, if there are those of the clergy who carry off women, they shall be cast out of their ranks. But if they are from the laity who carry (them) off, as well as those who are the helpers in this matter, whether of the clergy or the laity, they shall be anathematized until both parties come to that which is proper, and they shall remain outside the Church in sorrow and remorse for a specified time. Then they may be pardoned.

Ninth: It was reported in the synod that there are believers in many places who compel their hand-maidens to perform impure and abominable deeds of fornication, so that they[1] may give them the proceeds of the abominable fee which they collect. They even go as far in this audacity as to withhold from them what is necessary and the sustenance that ought to be given them, and because of the destitution which overtakes them they destroy {119} themselves in this sin of the service of fornication in order for that which is necessary for their supply to be filled.

The synod decreed that from now on none of the believers shall be allowed, for the sake of a fee, or in order for the proper necessities to be given, to act in any way to willfully allow his hand-maid to become a prostitute. Henceforth, whoever is discovered to do this shall be anathematized by the Church until he does what is proper and there is no wicked pretext for his hand-maid to become a prostitute.

Tenth: Concerning ex votos, offerings, and gifts given by prostitutes to churches, monasteries, and holy places, the synod decreed that they may not be accepted, and anyone who is found to have taken from them shall become liable for judgment.

Eleventh: It was reported in the synod that there are some of the faithful who, because of the fear of God which is in them, and because they seek to obtain an advantage for themselves at the time when their departure from this life is near, leave a bequest to churches, monasteries, and hospitals, or to the poor, or something separately to each one of their endeavors, and there are those who have servants and hand-maids who command that they be given over to freedom, or they give them to churches or monasteries or hospitals, or to other men to serve them, but those who are their heirs are discovered after their death to be faithless to the bequests which were made by their testators, and do not allot (the bequests) as they were commanded. Also the servants and hand-maidens which were loosed in freedom, or were given to churches or monasteries and hospitals or to other men, they kept for themselves in servitude before them as their own slaves.

Concerning these and those who have bequests such as these, the synod decreed and commanded that they should remain in bonds and anathemas until they do as their testators commanded.

Twelfth: It was reported in the synod that there are some servants who, under the pretext of a (religious) commitment, rise up against their masters and go to receive ordination or one of the ecclesiastical ranks. Then afterwards it happens that they are either captured by their masters and render service before them, or they depart and flee.

Concerning this the synod adjudged that as soon as freedom from their service to their masters is established, and they show trustworthy writs, then they may apply themselves to ecclesiastical ranks, trustworthy testimonies being given concerning them by trustworthy men.

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[1] I.e., the women who were forced into prostitution.

Thirteenth: Since all things ecclesiastical are according to order, rank, and designated authority, which is ordered and established by the Holy Spirit for the sake of discipline, instruction, and common profit, all ranks {120} and all orders, the higher, middle, and lower, shall attend to them[1] and, according to their need for one another, shall be supplied, the lower rising to ascend to the middle and the middle to the higher. But the higher are especially intimate, on account of rank, with him who is the Author of orders, the Holy Spirit, and through their mediation heavenly gifts are given by God to men. These things are duly set forth and elucidated in the writings[2] — though they are also set forth in other places — so that when any bishop gives a command or does anything properly, no one placed under his authority is allowed to rise up against him or despise his command. If there are those who so act, they become liable for the vigorous judgment of justice. In the same way, too, those things which are duly done and decreed by metropolitans a bishop has no right to rise up against or to overthrow. Likewise, such things decreed and established by the patriarch none of the metropolitans or bishops are allowed to transgress or to annul — not even one of them — for it is a heavenly order. For all members are beneath the head, and all give heed to him, and he manifests his anxiety and care for all of them. However, above the head there is no one except the Maker of the head and of all the members.

Because it is evident that these things are so ordered and established, whenever the patriarch sends to summon the metropolitans and bishops, or a metropolitan instructs the bishops, or a bishop sends word to those who are under his authority, they are obliged to obey whatever they have been commanded by them with diligence and care, while they are not permitted to transgress against their commandment. Also, if it should happen that the metropolitans and bishops arrive at the see of the patriarch, or the bishops at the site of the metropolis, and it happens that the patriarch or the metropolitan is not found in his city or at his work, the bishops are not allowed to encroach upon the see or affairs of the metropolitan, to speak or to attend to matters of administration, except by command of the patriarch. Again, neither are the metropolitans and bishops allowed to enter the city of the see and administration of the patriarch at such a time, to command, to act, or to compose writs in any way in matters of administration, without his command and permission from him, nor to enter into the liturgy and stand in the service when he is not present, nor, in the same way, a bishop in the see of the metropolis, nor a metropolitan in the see of a bishop, unless they are with the patriarch.

{121} **Fourteenth:** There are certain things that are especially exalted by the entire community, and are also greatly venerated, and there is a certain honor in which these things are held by the entire community. It is right that these should be carefully established and observed, one of which is this: since the title "patriarch" is translated "father of rulership", and all ecclesiastical authorities are beneath him and from him receive the power and authority to become heads and rulers, it is right that in all the churches in the land of this exalted and glorious kingdom of our victorious lord, Kosrau, the King of Kings, his name[3] should be proclaimed in the litanies of the liturgy. No one of the metropolitans and bishops shall be allowed to neglect establishing this canon in all the churches of his see and administration. Whoever is neglectful shall be liable to the rebuke of the community.

Fifteenth: It was the will of the synod that each four years the metropolitans and bishops should gather with the patriarch for the sake of common matters, so that by their access to one another in his midst they might reform those things in need of correction, and the things which are orderly might be re-affirmed and firmly fixed. This shall be before the

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[1] I.e., "all things ecclesiastical."

[2] Since it goes on to say "they are also set forth in other places," the writings referred to may be the Holy Scriptures.

[3] I.e., the Patriarch's name.

Great Fast[1] of the year, when the patriarch is in his see city. Unless necessities call and the patriarch writes and makes known to them that he wishes them to come, they ought to come quickly, without negligence. However, if certain pressing matters occur, they ought to clearly make them known in writing through their messengers. But if there is one who does not come according to the definition which was established, or there are those who, when matters are urgent, and they are written to by the patriarch, do not come, do not send letters, or they from negligence remain and do not come, they will become liable for the judgment and rebuke of the synod.

Sixteenth: It seemed to the synod that, as this canon was established — that once in four years the metropolitans and bishops should gather with the patriarch so that concerns and affairs of the community might have correction — in the same way also the bishops should gather to their own metropolis once a year in the month of 'Ilol, and all matters, as is right, should be reported in the community, and corrections which are needed to be made should be provided for in their midst so that there may be profit for the community: if there is strife and enmity in the midst, these will be resolved and brought to an end. If there are bishops who from negligence remain and do not come, they should be censured by the synod.

Seventeenth: It was said by the synod that, because {122} the order of the priesthood is higher and more honorable than all orders and degrees, and all things belonging to it are great and glorious, it is proper for priests that they should live in all cleanliness, purity, and acceptability, standing aloof from, and completely expelling from their thoughts, all hatred, grudge-bearing, enmity, and a devious and bitter mind, the same which are born of the will of Satan. They should be teaching, reproving, and admonishing those who are in this painful sickness of an evil disposition, in order to gain and deliver them from the destruction of their souls. However, if they should be discovered to have an (evil) disposition[2], and bitterness, and grudge-bearing, and they are at enmity with men, such, if they are metropolitans or bishops who are guilty of this corruption[3], shall be dismissed from their ranks.

Eighteenth: It seemed good to the synod that since bishops are ordained by their own metropolitans, or by their command or that of the patriarch, and without such it is impossible for a bishop to be ordained, in the same way too, metropolitans ought to be ordained by the patriarch or with his permission, and without such, bishops should not be allowed to ordain a metropolitan, and whoever is (so) ordained, the ordination shall not be confirmed, and those who ordained (him) will become liable for the judgment of the synod.

Nineteenth: It was the will of the synod that those who are called to the rank of the episcopacy, whoever they may be, should be ordained through the agency of their own metropolitan, or that of the patriarch, or by permission of letters from one of them, such writs, which are sent in the place of the metropolitan or the patriarch, being (placed) in the midst. If all the bishops of the province are not able to come to him who is being ordained, they shall send their agreement in writing, and he, whoever he may be, shall be confirmed in the presence of three bishops at the very least, there being in the midst of them the writs of their own metropolitan as well as of the patriarch, so that the enactment may be duly completed. When he is established, he shall swiftly make his journey for the veneration and sight of the patriarch that he may be completed by him in accordance with the canon which has been set forth. Those who are ordained outside of this canon shall cease from their ranks, and those who established them shall be liable for the judgment of the synod.

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[1] I.e., Lent.

[2] ?ܒܝܫܘܬܐ.

[3] ?ܕܒܒܘܣܬܐ.

Twentieth: It appeared to the synod that for the sake of caution this canon ought to be more clearly renewed as well: this exalted gift of the priesthood, which is graciously given to the holy church by the Lord, the Spirit, that by its mediation {123} heavenly benefits might be given to men, and through it such things might be perfected and fulfilled as are supplied by the Creator to the creation, metropolitans and bishops shall not be allowed, by the "Word of Christ", to give for a bribe or sell for a fee, for it is exalted and higher than the world and all that is in it. Those who consider giving (ordination) in this way purchase for themselves Gehenna and the punishment reserved for the wicked in the world to come. Their conversation and manners are with the company of Simon, who thought that the gift of God could be purchased with the substance of this world. If it is a metropolitan or a bishop who is guilty in these matters, he who thought to give and he who thought to receive shall be completely dismissed from their ranks and from all ecclesiastical ministry.

Twenty-first: It was the will of the synod that, in accord with the law that was previously established for priests — that in justice and in the fear of God they should govern their affairs, and that they should concern themselves to set free the defrauded and oppressed from their oppressor, and to pass judgment with justice without regard of persons, not condemning the innocent, and not pronouncing the guilty innocent, since judgment belongs to God, and not being caught in the engulfing maw[1] of bribe-taking — this canon should also be established here: none of the priests may venture, in matters of judgment or in anything at all, to take a bribe, (thereby) condemning himself and stirring up against himself the divine wrath. For if the sudden punishment of overpowering death came upon both Ananias and Sapphira before the feet of the apostles because they were deceptive and concealed some of the price of their own field which they had sold — even though it was some of what belonged to them which they concealed, and they had not robbed others — how much more bitter and potent a punishment do those prepare for themselves who are appointed to fill the place of the apostles, so as to be killing, hiddenly and openly before God, those who give a bribe as well as those for whom a bribe is given. And the blood of him who was given an opportunity to sin, and the iniquity because of which he who was unjustly treated sinned[2], from whom will this be required if not from the hands of unjust priests, who drowned the innocent and guilty alike, with the result thay (have drowned) themselves even more than those whom they drowned?

Therefore, the synod has adjudged that from now on any priest whatsoever who is ensnared by falling into bribe-taking and is convicted, shall become strictly liable for the judgment of the Church.

Twenty-second: It was reported in the synod that, since in no way ought arrogance and haughtiness to be seen in priests, and also that they should not work injustice, since they are established as judges over those who do such things, and it is appropriate that they should manifest in themselves a good example, (therefore) none of the metropolitans or {124} bishops shall be allowed to make an appointment[3] or issue orders in matters of administration in the concerns of his fellow bishop, either in his lifetime or at his departure, unless he is (so) commanded by the patriarch. Whoever has been appointed (ordained) in such a way, the appointment (ordination) shall not be confirmed, and he who does the appointing (ordaining) shall become liable to judgment from the synod.

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[1] ܒܠܥܬܐ ܡܣܒܢܘܬܐ.

[2] I.e., he who was unjustly forced to pay a bribe or fee.

[3] Or, "perform an ordination."

Twenty-third: It seemed good to the synod that when a bishop departs[1] it is incumbent upon his metropolitan, if there is one, to gather his fellow-bishops, and they should go and exhort the citizens of the city to elect for themselves a person who is suitable, and they should ordain him. If a metropolitan should depart, the bishops of the province should gather and encourage the citizens, so that with their mediation and agreement a suitable person may be chosen, and they should inform the patriarch. The maximum time in the case of a metropolitan — or a bishop, if there is not a metropolitan— before a bishop is appointed in the place of one who has died, and their informing the patriarch about the metropolitan or about the bishop if there is no metropolitan, should be four months. Only if it happens (that) matters of necessity call is it right for the matter to be stretched out in regard to time, but the bishops are not allowed to be neglectful in these things.[2]

Twenty-fourth: Concerning bishops and clergy not leaving their sees and the churches for which they were designated, (in order to) depart and make (new) sees and (to) fulfill their ministry in other places, it appeared to the synod that, according to the canons which were established by the ancients concerning these things, so it should remain.

Twenty-fifth: It was reported in the synod that there are some who previously received churches and monasteries in order to serve in them, but they took from their resources and gave (them) to their relatives. Again, it happened that after their departure those who were their heirs retained for themselves the properties and resources of those places. Again, there were those who were given responsibility as managers and stewards, either in churches, or in monasteries, or in hospices, and they have sold or pawned some of the resources of those places.

Concerning those who are known to have given their relatives some of the resources of churches and monasteries, and those who have retained as their own the properties and resources of churches and monasteries, the synod has adjudged that these should be required (to make restitution), and whatever they are known to retain from churches, monasteries, and hospices they should bring forward and give up. Those who are obstinate and do not give up whatever they owe shall become liable for ecclesiastical judgment until they do what is right. From now on metropolitans, bishops, presbyters, {125} deacons, and believers are not permitted to sell or pawn, on their own authority, any of the property of churches, monasteries, or hospices, except by the will and agreement of the community. Those who hereafter do otherwise shall become liable for ecclesiastical judgment until they do what is right.

Twenty-sixth: It was said in the synod that there are bishops, clergy, and faithful who purchase property as though for churches, monasteries, and hospices, and make deeds in their own name and place them in their houses. Occasions arise where these deeds are discovered in their houses, and there has been loss.

The synod has adjudged that if metropolitans, bishops, presbyters, deacons, or believers at times purchase property for churches, monasteries, or hospices, and make deeds in their own name, [or they assign the property of these places in their own name,] they shall not be allowed to place these deeds in their own houses or in other places, but they shall be placed in the archives of the church, and they shall quickly write a waiver of the property and place it in the archives of the church.

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[1] I.e., dies.

[2] Caveat lector: From "If a metropolitan should depart" onward the canon is difficult to sort out. I have reconstructed it as well as I am able, though not without the helpful intervention of Prof. Sebastian Brock. I would refer the reader to Chabot's Syriac text, page 124, lines 8-15.

Twenty-seventh: Concerning offerings, ex votos, tithes, and first-fruits which are given to churches, monasteries, and hospices in the jurisdiction of any bishop, the synod has adjudged that the bishop should be acquainted with them and they should be administered at his command.

Twenty-eighth: It was said in the synod that there are bishops who, because they are unversed in the meaning of apostolic canons, offer ordination to men who have no known places in which they may be accepted[, and they are rebuffed on all sides[1] and are not accepted]. Subsequently they remove them from the rank which they received, and thereafter they become liable for punishment.

Concerning this the synod has adjudged that none of the metropolitans and bishops is allowed to bring men to ordination when there are no known places for them, neither does the canon allow this. Everyone who in this way brings men to ordination, the enactment shall be void, and they shall become liable for the rebuke of the synod.

Twenty-ninth: Concerning goods and resources and everything belonging to churches and monasteries of the see of a bishop, the synod has adjudged that {126} his clergy and designated faithful ought to be aware of them, so that after his departure from the world nothing belonging to the Church may be lost because of the ignorance of men concerning it. As long as he lives it shall be kept under his own command. In the same way, if there is anything which is the bishop's, he may leave it to whomever he chooses, and no one may seize it in the name of the property[2] of the Church. But anything belonging to the Church should be kept in its place, and anything belonging to the bishop should remain the bishop's, or his to whom he is pleased to give it, in order that injustice may not be served in the midst, and sin occur.

Thirtieth: This was reported in the synod, that on occasion men are found to have been entrusted with the ecclesiastical rank of the episcopacy, and they have taken from the resources of the Church and given to their kinsmen and to their relatives. They have neglected the churches and have not attended to what belongs to them, and that which was due to be expended from the church for the sustenance of the clergy and for strangers and for those who happen (to turn up) they withheld from them.

The synod has adjudged that the bishops are not allowed to take from the resources or from anything belonging to the Church and give it to their relatives, nor again for this reason to be negligent of their care for the churches. However, from their own property, which they possessed prior to the episcopacy, and that which expressly came to them from the episcopacy, they are allowed to give to whomever they choose.

Thirty-first: It was said in the synod that occasionally some of the clergy, and some monks, and some believers have been discovered forming cliques against their bishops, making a covenant by way of contract, and by gifts, and in writing, and they have caused trouble for them, and caused serious harm to them, and again, there were some who stirred up the clergy, each against his colleague.

Concerning such as these the synod decreed that none of the clergy, monks, or laymen shall be allowed to rise up in cliques and with oaths to devise a plot against their bishops or against each other. But if there is some complaint against their bishops, they should inform their metropolitan, and if there is no resolution for it there, let them bring their cause before the patriarch that he may command in (the matter) whatever is right. And it is the same for a metropolitan. Those who act otherwise shall be suspended.

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[1] ܘܗܢܘܢ ܡܬܛܪܕܝܢ ܠܟܠ ܓܒ̈ܝܢ?.

[2] ܦܪܘܣ ܩܢܝܢܐ for ܦܪܘܣ ܒܢܝܢܐ.

Thirty-second: It seemed good to the synod that because there are some who have been expelled by their bishops for certain reasons, they[1] come and accuse them, fabricating false charges against them. Concerning those who are such as these, the synod has adjudged that their ways should be examined as to whether they are honest or not. If it is learned that their words are trustworthy, they should be accepted, and there should be a resolution of their charges {127} with their bishops. But if their charges are not genuine, whether they are clergy or believers, they shall become liable for ecclesiastical judgment.

Thirty-third: It was said in the synod that there are places where, when a bishop departs, some go and bind themselves on oath, and they establish factions by contract and in writing to follow after a certain person, though they are not concerned about the fact that (the successor) should be one who is worthy, but rather that he should be the one with whom they are pleased.

Concerning this the synod has adjudged that if these have formed cliques on his behalf with the encouragement of the person (himself), if he is a cleric he may not serve in his rank until he is corrected. They who established a clique should remain outside the church for a specified period.

Thirty-fourth: It was reported in the synod that there are some who, because of their lack of training and unworthiness of access to ecclesiastical ranks, go and seek refuge among pagans or among laymen, and they harass the bishops, so that also much harm is done to the bishops.

Concerning these the synod has decreed that all who seek to apply themselves to ecclesiastical ranks in this way may in no way attain them, and they shall be barred from the Church for a designated period until they desist from their agitation.

Thirty-fifth: It was reported in the synod that there are some who build monasteries, and because they do not set aside an endowment for them they become desolate, and no one can be found to care for their expenses.

Concerning this the synod has adjudged that all those who build monasteries, until they have set aside for them a specific endowment from which they may be sustained, they may not be consecrated, nor are they allowed, on their own authority, to take possession of them, or to bring in or remove abbots, but they should attend to their expenses in those things necessary. Other things needed to be done there shall be done by the command of the bishop whose jurisdiction the monastery is subject to.

Thirty-sixth: Concerning clergy who become stewards for laymen or become tutors for pagans or laymen: from now on clergy may not fall into affairs such as these, and the honor which they received from the Church be (thus) brought to shame.

Thirty-seventh: That from now on Christians may not allow their daughters to learn worldly music.

Thirty-eighth: Presbyters who are in the see of the bishop shall be higher in rank than the village (presbyters) who are under his administration.

{128} Thirty-ninth: Since there are among the bishops in the great province of the patriarch more than the bishops in the other provinces, it was the will of the synod that of such as are notable from this province and from the other provinces, the second to the patriarch is higher than the second in the other provinces. In the same way, the third is higher than the third, and the fourth is higher than the fourth. Their seating shall be in this order up to seven bishops in the other provinces, their metropolitans being included in the same number. But the rest of the bishops in this province of the patriarch shall be higher in seating and in order than the rest of (the bishops of) each of the seven other provinces.

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[1] I.e., the expelled.

These canons are completed, being thirty-nine.

These canons, which through the operation of divine grace, at the instigation of the father of fathers, Mar Patriarch, were renewed[1] and established in the council of us all and with the will and agreement in writing from our holy brothers, the bishops Mar Sargis, bishop of Mašmahig[2], and Mar 'Isḥaq, bishop of Hagar and Pit-'Ardašir, by way of their clergy — the name of him who was sent by Sargis the bishop is Mar Šem'on the presbyter, and of him who was from 'Isḥaq the bishop, is Sargis the deacon — and the agreement with us, also in writing, sent willingly from our holy brothers, the bishops Mar Brik Yahbeh, bishop of Sirzor, and Mar Babai, bishop of Borzan; and the writings of canons and enactment(s) made and confirmed by the holy fathers, the patriarchs who have been in this see of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, we accepted and agreed to with all cheerfulness, alacrity, and a good intention.

Since there are some of our brother bishops, part of whom because their lands are far off, and part of whom because they were not informed of these matters, who for this reason failed to come and ratify with us this great and exalted administrative action, which is full of life and benefits for all the Church, even though we know that in their intentions they are present with us, yet when, according to the will of the Lord, the door of mercies is opened to them and they learn of these things which have been done in this blessed council, those who are able to come {129} personally will fly and come with rejoicing of mind. Those who are afflicted by sicknesses or by distresses will come in name through their letters. And (so) they will be partakers with us in the cheerful feast of the Church, and also be gladdened by the splendor which Christ, her Magnifier, has given her. Room is left at the lower margins of the canons so that, when they come they may sign, one after another, and seal and confirm with us these regulations which, with the encouragement of the great shepherd, Mar Patriarch, have been ordered and established, that with one like voice the Church may cry out and confess her Lord, Christ. For that which he said in his life-giving Gospel, "The whole flock shall be one, and one shepherd,"[3] has come to completion in us, in that we are his flock and his shepherd is shepherding us, and we are not going after a stranger, because we no longer recognize his voice: we have been taught by the voice of our shepherd, and we follow him who will lead us to the great and glorious sheepfold of the house of our Lord, and in him we will take refuge and be kept from all harm. From him we ask that he make his tranquillity and peace to dwell with his people, with his Church, and with all the inhabited world, and that he bring to an end and abolish wars from the ends of the earth, while priests maintain their harmony and the laity are made to abound in good things, and our shepherd stands in joy at the head of his flock, and he hears the utterance of the Lord of the sheep, who calls out and says to him, "Come, O good shepherd, who tended for me my lambs, my sheep, and my ewes, and endured the burden of the day and its heat, and carried their rams upon your shoulders, and nourished and attended to the sheep in the heavenly pasture, and cleaved to, cherished, and concealed them beneath your arms, more than an eagle broods over its young and takes them under its wings. Come, be received in the bridal-chamber of your Lord, and receive a crown and ineffable gifts. Rest from the labor and weariness which has assailed you, and the afflictions which you endured for me. Henceforth you will act as shepherd in the paradise of my kingdom. For you and for your flock, lo, the way is prepared, and in it (are) good things, as I promised you, that 'I am going to prepare for you a way.'[1] Behold, the feast of your delights is set forth. Enter, dwell, recline, and take delight, according to the pleasure of your will, in good things without end."

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[1] ܐܬܚܕܬܘ for ܐܬܬܚܕܘ.

[2] ܡܫܡܗܓ for ܡܝܫܡܗܓ.

[3] Jn. 10:16.

We, the metropolitans and bishops whose names are inscribed above beside our seals, have confirmed these writings through the steadfastness of the excellent and reverend of God, our father, Mar Ḥazqiel, catholicos-patriarch, and they are valid for the Church and for her heirs.

The synod of Ḥazqiel the catholicos is ended.

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[1] Jn. 14:2.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR IŠßO‘YAHB 587 AD)

{130} Again, the synod of Mar Išo‘yahb[1], catholicos patriarch of the East, and the God-loving metropolitans, the heads of the provinces, and the excellent bishops, the heads of the region within the provinces.

Now, then, the preface to these, our ecclesiastical, synodical, legal, and canonical writings, (will be) continual thanksgiving on our behalf and on behalf of all, duly offered by all of us, as servants of the community, to God over all, who is the Provider of our benefits, the Governor of our lives, and the Creator and Lord of all that came to be and exists. (He is) the Fashioner and Orderer of both worlds, that is to say, this mortal world, which began as a created thing, and will end as a transitory thing, and the immortal world beyond the computation of times, which began as a created thing, but does not come to an end, as though it were impotent, but persists endlessly according to the will of the Orderer of all. He it is who beautified the course of mortality by the light of reason, and assisted reason, strengthened it, and adorned it with legislation and ordinances appropriate to it. He, by his authoritative command, also permitted us, the worshippers of his Lordship, as the heads of his sheepfolds, to gather in his name in this generation, to set in order and reform the folds of his flocks, that is, to ratify the previous things divinely established by the teachers of the truth, to add the needed things, which necessarily are required for the disciples of the truth, and to uproot vices, so that all things may become a propitiatory sacrifice to God and (there may be) a healing medicine to the servants of God.

It was pleasing to him in his lovingkindness, then, to turn toward us in his mercifulness, in that he provided for the land in our days, in a failing time, for he raised up from a renowned family of the glorious kingdom a good, mighty, victorious, and peace-loving lord, the philanthropic lord for ever, Hormizd[2], the King of Kings, as it were for the tranquillity of the entire habitable world and for the happiness of the inhabitants of the earth. By his hands, and by his authoritative, good, and wise commands, he revealed the riches of his immense compassion. He, our good and victorious lord, the King of Kings, with a rich mind compounded of the love of God and the love of men, and rich in awe-inspiring wisdom, beautified his kingdom and made the land of his dominion a bridal feast of joy of heart {131} for all its inhabitants, uprooting evils from it like harmful thorns (and) trees, and bitter tares, and planting in it good things in the likeness of fruitful trees. Like a good sower, within a short time he revived the dominion of his kingdom from the mortal state of evil deeds, and filled it with the abiding riches of good deeds. Even more, he revealed the abundance of his mercifulness and the multitude of his love toward our Christian people, the servants and subjects of his lordship, who, all of us, with a steadfast mind which has no guile or spot in it, and as venerators and debtors of his lordship, intercede for his lordship by night and day, that he might hold his dominion for ever, and that the Inhabitant of Heaven, the Lord of kings, might be with him in everything for ever, and the inhabitants of the earth and dwellers in the world might be subject to his lordship for ever, according to the will of the Lord.

This synodical council, the same which is disclosed below, took place in the eighth year of the reign of the good, victorious, mild, and philanthropic Hormizd, the King of Kings, preserved and protected by heavenly help for ever in happiness of heart, health of body, and success of his intentions, according to the will of the Lord.

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[1] Ruled 582-595.

[2] Reigned 579-590.

We, the chief administrators of the holy churches, were summoned canonically by the head of fathers, Mar Išoʻyahb, catholicos-patriarch of the East, and we gathered and assembled canonically — we, the metropolitans, the heads of the provinces, and we, the bishops, the heads of the land(s) within the provinces by heavenly provision — according to the tradition which has obtained in the churches from the summit of days. We, who by heavenly design and royal command hold and govern the paternal and apostolic sees in this glorious kingdom, the mistress of kings, came to him who is the venerable head and father of the community, Mar Patriarch, in the fourth year of his rulership, and we arrived before the paternal and patriarchal throne, which is fixed catholically and confirmed paternally in Christian rule, by apostolic ordinance, in the Babylonian plain, within Maḥoze, the royal city. We gathered by heavenly command, steadfastly confident that there was with us, seated royally and authoritatively at our head, Jesus our Life-giver, according to his promise to us, "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I among them."[1] When we gathered, we began, one after another, to be corrected by one another and to correct one another judicially, in a lowly spirit, so that when corrections go forth from our presence, as it were from the chief shepherd, we may bring the teachings and reforms and ordinances to the folds of our flocks confidently, with freedom of speech, that thus, as from the summit of rulership, reforms may be multiplied unhindered in all portions of the expanses of the {132} garden of the Church, which is, indeed, the divine Paradise, which thrives by the watering of grace, and blooms with propitiatory fruits, (those which) increase[2] righteousness and prune away sin.

Therefore, in this confidence and unfailing good hope, we gathered — I, the patriarch, and we, the metropolitans, whose names are inscribed beside our seals in our handwriting, by which this book is sealed. From it permanent benefits spring, and it rejects all senseless prejudice and is full of profit and help for the disciples of Christ. We supplicate them to hold fast to our teaching, and we command them, by the "Word of our Lord", to do even more for the sake of the divine household, conscientiously and not perfunctorily, really and not superficially, as disciples and not contumaciously, removing from themselves vileness and provocative and damning imperfection, that they might preserve the mystery of their holy washing[3] rightly, without stain, until the last breath, up to the day of Christ. For with sacrifices such as these one is pleasing to God[4], as it is written.

Two things ought to be confirmed among us, that is, the definition of the true faith, and definitions of the laws of propitiatory virtue, according to the instruction which is through the apostles, and according to the teaching which is through the fathers, which began at Jerusalem, in accord with the declaration and promise of the Lord. Within a short time it sped, as it were, on wings of the Spirit and filled the earth unto the ends of the inhabited world, and continues indestructibly, and branches out, in an endless wonder, in many parts of the world for a witness to all the nations[5], as it is written.

First chapter: At the beginning of the setting forth of these canons, then, is the orderly setting forth of the true faith, for it is, so to speak, the beginning of all segments of the fear of God. In it all the varieties of righteous comeliness are made fair and resplendent, which our Lord first proclaimed, and entrusted, through his twelve, to all who were students and are students of his Gospel; which the early fathers proclaimed and taught in their generations completely and sufficiently; which the holy fathers spoke, taught, wrote down, and confirmed for the churches in all regions, in complete sayings and short statements encompassing many things. (These were) the three hundred eighteen (fathers) who gathered in Nicea, and the one hundred and fifty who gathered in Byzantium for the abolition of the impiety of the Ariminians[1] — the Anomoeans[2] — who were insolent toward the Being of the Son, and of the Macedonians, the semi-Arians, who were insolent toward the Being of the Holy Spirit. {133} This catholic faith is also preserved and proclaimed without spot among us in all the churches of God for ever, as we now make known, setting forth our faith, which is that of the fathers, as it is, very briefly adding to each of its statements the meaning and commentary appropriate to them, while asking and requesting our Lord, the Lord of creation, with prostrate prayer, to confer his help upon us, that we might interpret profitably and helpfully.

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[1] Mt. 18:20.

[2] The antecedent of "those which increase . . . and prune away" is "reforms".

[3] ?for ܐܪܙܐ ܕܚܣܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܕ̈ܫܝܗܘܢ.

[4] Cf. Heb. 13:16.

[5] Cf. Mt. 24:14.

We believe in one God, the Father omnipotent, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and in one Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father.

Although the reading order of the phrases places separately the names of the divine Trinity because of the relationship of things which specifically and properly correspond to (each of) the names, yet the meaning and sense of the paternal formulation requires a sequence such as this for an exposition of the Trinity, which is (actually) beyond numbering, so that it may be made clear that what is one, and one, and one signifies one essential nature, as it is written, "The Lord your God, the Lord is one."[3] What is "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" refers to the different qnome of the Essence[4], according to the tradition of the Gospel of Christ our Life-giver, "Go out and make disciples of all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."[5] When the fathers added "God, Lord, and Spirit," and associated (these) titles in common with the specific names "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," they clearly revealed what the titles are which are common, and (that) each one of them — that is, the three of them — extend to (each of) the three qnome. For it is clear, without dispute, that the Father is God, Lord, and Spirit, and the Son is Lord, God, and Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is Spirit, Lord, and God. The fathers very briefly affirmed the confession of the Trinity, and by it they taught, wisely and fully, the consubtantiality, co-essentiality, and differentiation of qnome, and the unity of divinity. They proclaimed, therefore, co-essentiality and consubtantiality for the sake of stopping the mad mouth of Arius, who impiously attempted to divide the co-essentiality of the Trinity. But the fathers proclaimed the differentiation of qnome of the Trinity for the abolition of the thinking of the obstinate Jews who are convinced that God is one qnoma. The titles which are distributed and common, and are associated with the names which are specific and undistributable, that is the one Godhead, one Lordship, and one Spirithood, our fathers proclaimed for the abolition and destruction of the teaching of pagans, {134} who babble and confess various godheads (and) lordships.

When they had thus overthrown the impiety of Arius by the proclamation of co-essentiality, and had also silenced the childishness of the Jews by the differentiation of qnome, and muzzled the error of paganism as well by the unity of Lordship, they then add to their confession those things which are suitable to their faith. To "one God" they added "omnipotent", and said, "Maker of all things seen and unseen," for he is the Maker, Fashioner, and Author of all in all. In the same way, to "one Lord" they added "Jesus Christ", and revealed that what is "one" is common to the qnome of the Trinity, as indicated above. But in that they did not add "one Lord, the Son," as in "one God, the Father", instead, altering the order of their words and saying "in one Lord, Jesus Christ," it did not escape the notice of the upright, that it magnificently explains and wisely proclaims the humanity of God the Word in the one unity of the divinity and humanity of Christ, even though those of the company of Eutyches babble and reject the humanity of the Son of God. For the title "Anointed One"[1] is indicative of his divinity, which is from the Father, and of his humanity, which is indisputably from the mother, even though Eutyches and the offspring of his error speak foolishly and deceive, denying the taking of our humanity, or affirming the obliteration of the humanity of Christ. Indeed, the fathers consequently continued, saying, "the Only-begotten and First-born of all creatures,"[2] as it is written.

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[1] For ܐܪ̈ܝܡܝܢܝܐ, i.e., the minority at the Council of Rimini in the West who manipulated the council into promulgating the "Homoiousios" doctrine as a substitute for "Homoousios" of the orthodox party.

[2] For ܠܐ ܡܕܡ̈ܝܢܐ.

[3] Cf. Deut. 6:4; Mk. 12:29.

[4] For ܐܝܬܘܬܐ.

[5] Mt. 28:19.

Again, they add, "by whose hands the worlds were established and everything was created," revealing (that) he was the Cause and Maker of all with his Father. Again, they make known concerning his Essence that he was "begotten of his Father before all ages and was not made — Light from Light, true God from true God" — Jesus Christ in his divinity. Again, they continued, as it were, for the destruction of Arius, setting forth the word "homoousion," that is, "consubtantial" and "co-essential" with the Father, by whose hand everything came to be — Jesus Christ in his divinity. And struggling in the invincible armor of true teaching, with which they clothed themselves against the phantoms and apparitions of the spurious teachings of the Simonians and Manicheans, they say, "who for us men and for our salvation descended from Heaven and became embodied by the Holy Spirit and by the Virgin Mary and became man" — Jesus Christ, in the union of his natures, in his revelation [in the flesh, and in his embodiment — for this indicates the uniting of the natures of divinity and humanity, in that he descended, became incarnate, and became man. {135} It makes known the assumption of our humanity indisputably, so that from every side the hallucinations of the company of Simon and Mani might be removed, who deny his incarnation, and the taking of a body, and the revelation] of God the Word, who took our humanity and dwelt in it — as it is written, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"[3] — and that the greatness of the lovingkindness of him who descended and dwelt among us might all the more be revealed.

The impious Arius, because he ascribed things exalted and lowly to the nature of the divinity of the Word, and did not know to apply them separately or conjointly, as the truth requires, for this reason stumbled, and fell, and erred, and deceived, and was anathematized and excommunicated. But the fathers add to and complete the saying concerning the dispensation, and after the teaching concerning the divine nature of the Only-begotten, and after the teaching concerning the unity of the natures of Christ, that is, of his Godhead, which does not change and does not die, and his humanity, which is not denied or disregarded, they added teaching concerning his humanity. As they had revealed clearly above concerning his divinity, (so) they would reveal clearly concerning his humanity, which was taken for us and for our salvation and for the renewal of all creatures, saying, "He was crucified for us in the days of Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and died, and was buried, and rose after three days," as the Holy Scriptures say — Jesus Christ in his humanity. That is — let us speak the truth — in his incarnate state he accepted the death of the cross for us, in that it is clear to all the upright in their confession that, as the nature of his divinity did not suffer and die, so neither did his soul receive the sentence of death, for it is not in the nature of the soul to be subject to the limitation of death. Our Lord bears witness, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul."[4] And the reality bears witness (to this), for after our Lord was crucified, and his holy body died and was buried, he went in his soul to Paradise.

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[1] For ܡܫܝܚܐ.

[2] See the use of "only-begotten" in John's Gospel; cf. Col. 1:15.

[3] Jn. 1:14.

[4] Mt. 10:28.

Again, the blessed fathers add, "And ascended to Heaven and sat down at the right hand of his Father" — Jesus Christ in his humanity. For he who exists eternally and indestructibly with his Father received exaltation and session at the right hand in his humanity, not in his Godhead. "And he is coming in glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom has no end" — Jesus Christ in his divinity and in his humanity.

And after they have spoken against the excommunicated band of Anomeans, they turn to the impiety of Macedonius, who blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, saying, "And in one Holy Spirit, the life-giving Lord, who proceeds from the Father and with the Father and Son is worshipped, who spoke in the prophets and apostles." The fathers, therefore, by their divine teaching, proclaimed strongly concerning the {136} qnoma of the Holy Spirit, and revealed that he is co-essential and consubtantial with the Father and the Son. As it is written, "He investigates everything, even the depths of God."[1]

This is the incorrupt faith, and this is its meaning, briefly, according to the sequence of its statements, by which the parṣopa of Christ is proclaimed fully — and the natures of his divinity and humanity — against those who acknowledge his divinity but deny his humanity, and against those [who acknowledge his humanity but deny his divinity, and against those] who deny his divinity and confess that the humanity is ordinary or like one of the righteous.

And because they were bequeathing the riches of their faith to the baptized, our blessed fathers added, "And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and in the resurrection of the dead, and in new life, and in the world to come."

After they had thus richly and fully proclaimed the truth, they turned thereafter to the anathematization of Arius and the children of his error. "But to those who say that there was (a time) when he did not exist, or before he was begotten he did not exist, or he came into being from nothing, or say he was from some other qnoma or essence, or reckon the Son of God changeable and mutable, such the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes." The heretics, that is, in their stubbornness, venture to ascribe the properties and sufferings of the nature of the humanity of Christ to the nature and qnoma of the Godhead and Essence of the Word, things which occasionally, because of the perfect union which the humanity of Christ had with his divinity, are ascribed to God economically, but not naturally.

This is the faith of the fathers, by which paganism, Judaism, and heresy are muzzled. By it Christianity is magnified and glorified. Whoever does not agree to these things casts himself down and denies the truth.

Second Canon: A defense of the writings and teachings of the holy Theodore, and against the slander of the heretics, who have spread false information concerning him.

It is right, therefore, after the truth of the faith, to speak concerning the teachers and preachers of the truth, necessarily discussing one of them at this time because the occasion has required it, that is, concerning the holy Theodore the Interpreter, who was in the land of Cilicia, the bishop of the city of Mopsuestia, who lived a chaste and toilsome life, and for forty-five years was celebrated in the rulership of the episcopacy. With a wise intellect which {137} was refreshed through the assistance of grace, he interpreted the Holy Scriptures and struggled with the alien teachings of worthless religions. He filled the ecclesiastical archives with a shining treasure of teachings and spiritual insights, for the help and edification of readers and hearers. With the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, he strove against the deceivers who, as teachers of error, poured forth doctrines contrary to the teaching of the truth. His teaching was therefore confirmed by the beauties of his own excellence, and his excellence was sealed by his true wisdom. Our Lord bore witness to him through signs and by the helps which emanated from him, for in his life he was celebrated among the true teachers, and after his death his name was cherished and his memorial resplendent in all the churches of God. The books and commentaries of the holy one were approved and dear to all those who confessed uprightly and did not apply themselves to error, for the truth of the apostolic faith was preserved in his commentaries and teachings as a prediction through the prophets, or as a proclamation through the apostles (would be). For also the blessed John Chrysostom, when he was perversely driven into exile, and was at the point of departing to our Lord, the Crowner of his contests, referred to the Interpreter as "the teacher of truth," and wrote him a letter during the time of affliction, speaking in this manner: "We remember, then, your fervent, steadfast, and spotless love, and we rejoice in you, for you are the treasury of the Church which is established in the land of Cilicia."

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[1] 1 Cor. 2:10.

But Satan, the enemy of truth by reason of his craftiness and envy, when he saw[1] these things, was pierced through, and put forth concerning him false (and) babbling rumors through heretics, and misled many, preparing them in his bitterness to reject the godly teachings of this doctor of the Church. Again, even now before the synod of the fathers, it was reported that at this time men have suddenly appeared who are called in name orthodox, who are, in their importunity, troublers of orthodoxy and of the teachings and traditions of the Church. They are striving with opposing force — which is (actually) impotent — against the mighty power of the true teaching which is stored up and placed with the help of grace in the books and commentaries of the Interpreter. Along with other things which they say in their agitation against him, they also speak against the commentary in the spiritual sense which the Interpreter composed for the book of the blessed Job, a book written sophistically and ostentatiously by one of the sophists — those who do not concern themselves with the truth, but contract and expand narratives with inventions which are fashioned from humbug, which is far from the truth, as is clear from a reading of the truth to all who understand (it) well — for except for a small portion of it, it is filled with {138} explanatory[2] words which are akin to blasphemy and falsehood. However, they have ventured to say, "Did not Moses write this book of the blessed Job?" and they have cheerfully accepted the humbug that they might have occasion to revile the teachers of the community. Therefore the tongue-tied and tiresome now strive against a man who, both in his life and in his death, was an instructor to the children of grace: (they are) like beetles and crickets from the corners, and from the dens of folly, like the Jews against our Lord.

Therefore, we decree by the "Word of God", who rules over all and holds the height and the depth, that no one from any of the ecclesiastical ranks is allowed, secretly or openly, to revile this doctor of the Church, or to reject his holy writings, or to accept that other[3] commentary which is alien to the truth, one which, as they say, interprets for a lover of humbug and a lover of polished words which are alien to the truth, in the likeness of harlots who love a luxurious ornament. One who ventures, hiddenly or openly, to stand against these things which we have said and written above shall be anathematized and a stranger from all ecclesiastical congregations until he comes to his senses and becomes a true disciple of the teachers against whom he prattles in his foolishness.

Third canon: Concerning the helps that have sprung up from legislation and the establishment of canons in each generation, in the Old (Testament) and in the New.

Let us accordingly turn, then, to briefly speak about the helps and benefits which the disciples of the truth have found in legislation and the establishment of canons — that is, in the ancient hope which served temporarily, and in the new proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. For in this way he is pleased, who is alone good and kind, to bless (the faculty of) reason with the watchfulness of laws, which keep it within the boundaries and orders which are appropriate to it. He exceedingly honors man — more than all creatures — not only in his first fashioning, which is incomparable, but also in the singular care which he shows him. For after he formed him and sealed him with the image of his Godhead, and fixed within him discretionary knowledge, which knows to draw near helpfully or to stand off cautiously, he also instructed him with legislation by which reason is upheld and association (with God) is preserved, laws which bear promises of benefits enticingly, and the threat of judgments fearsomely: some of them inherently, some by way of command, some in writing, that thus {139} the eternal power and everlasting divinity of the Maker of creatures might be proclaimed openly, without disguise, by the mute who make known silently, and by the articulate who proclaim verbally, and by writings which teach by text. Such is the Lordly care which the Creator showed in the beginning to the heads of our fashioning, the first humans, Adam and Eve, for he set forth for them a new and prescriptive law, by which he made three things known to them, that is, trial, submission, and honor. By it their discretion was tried, by it was made known their submission to his Lordship, and by it was revealed the honor of those who were higher than all (other) creatures.

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[1] ܚܐ for ܚܙܐ.

[2] The reading is uncertain. There is a correction in the text, perhaps intending "deceitful".

[3] So R; ms "that later". Chabot suggests that the reference is to a commentary by Ḥnana, head of the school of Nisibis, whose teaching was disapproved of by many in the Church of the East.

After the ages of the world had hastened on and increased, he set forth abundant laws for Israel after the flesh. Among them the noblest were written by the finger of God on tablets of stone, which were sent to them through the mediator of their salvation, Moses, (who was) the delivered and deliverer. These were appropriate to a temporal way of life which served, so to speak, for fifteen hundred years, until the types[1] discovered the Archetype, the Son of God who shone forth for the salvation and renewal of all, who, as the good, perfect, and authoritative one, prescriptively and authoritatively set forth laws upon the summit of the mountain after his baptism, following the election of his disciples at the beginning of the dispensation of his Gospel. These were perfect and worthy of the way of life of the kingdom of Heaven, which was revealed through him, while also, in the (subsequent) intervening time, he did not leave the generations of the world free of instructive teaching, in that he did not leave himself without a witness, as it is written. In this pathway, then, which pours forth permanent advantages, which is trodden out by God in the Old (Testament), and by the Son of God in the New — that is, by the divine Trinity in the Old and New — the apostles also traveled in their day and the fathers in their generations. They adorned the Church with all spiritual teaching, and surrounded it, as with a bulwark and rampart, with the watchful care of divine, instructive, enlightening, and justifying laws and canons. Now there is little time to narrate in order the many benefits and fine ordinances which have issued from the teaching of legislation and the establishment of canons, as a result of which thanksgiving is rendered to the Giver of laws, and blessedness (is granted) to the keepers of laws.

Because, then, we are conscious of these things, and things such as these, we also have gathered in the name and power of Jesus our Life-giver, with a faculty which is from him, to write for our contemporaries life-giving instruction appropriate to the chaste and orderly life of those who know God and are known by God.

Fourth canon: concerning the honor which is due from disciples and children to teachers and parents, and the care it is proper to show toward the education and instruction of disciples and children.

We think, therefore, {140} that after these things which have been helpfully said, it is good to speak and instruct concerning good works which justify and are not blameworthy, (and are) pleasing and not provoking. And before other things we should speak concerning the honor of parents and teachers, and concerning the instruction and discipline of children and disciples, for nature commands and teaches concerning such things through its discernment, Scripture through its instruction[1], thought innately, speech imperatively, writing[2]descriptively[3], ideas[4]enticingly, threats menacingly, teaching and instructing parents to cherish and instruct their offspring, and those who are born to cherish and honor their bearers — children and disciples out of duty, fathers and teachers by way of condescension. (In the case of the former) these things are freely given in honor and love obediently, as to the mediators and administrators of their advantages, and (in the case of the latter) they are freely given in honor and love by way of condescension, to those as a result of whom they are able to multiply honor and happiness, so that they may become wise and not execrable. For nature indeed, as a wise teacher, and the Lord of nature, as an authoritative Lord, has given one thing to parents and teachers and another to children and disciples. For the natural disposition seeks what is fleshly and is related to the animal, but the will seeks the spiritual and is made like that which is God's, so to speak[5], who is pleased to be called "Father" by us, and to take us to himself by grace as children of his love. For both of them, that is, for the (fleshly) and for the (spiritual), he appointed legislation, as is clear from some of the holy readings: "Honor your father and mother,"[6] for they are your cause and the mediators of your fleshly introduction to the mortal world. And concerning the spiritual it says, "For in Jesus Christ I begot you in the Gospel,"[7] as one who was for them a cause and a teacher, that they may become spiritually the children of grace — with a myriad other things which plainly instruct concerning such things.

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[1] ܛܘ̈ܦܣܐ for ܛܘܦܣܐ.

Concerning these things, therefore, we command and admonish by the "Word of our Lord", that both of these classes (of people) concern themselves with both of these admonitions which are pleasing to God, so that parents are not held in contempt and (therefore) murmur, and disciples and children are not damaged and (therefore) sin. May the blessing of the Lord keep him who (so) accepts and acts. Whoever is disobedient shall become liable for the curse and for the vengeance of God.

Fifth canon: concerning priests and deacons, the ministers of the altar of the New Covenant, that they should adapt their life-styles to the exalted position of their ministry.

It is permitted to speak with confidence, through the faculty we have received from the symbols and types of the ecclesiastical ministry, because of which[8] it is possible to say confidently that the priests, {141} the ministers of the altar, indeed bear the likeness and image, of our Lord, and that the deacons, the ministers of the Church, bear the likeness and image of the angels on high as servants of the true High Priest. For priests are appointed in the service of their priesthood as propitiators of God, absolvers of the people, and obedient teachers, and by these three perfect things they fulfill the law of their priesthood. As was said by the mediator of the Old Covenant concerning the priests who were ministers of shadowy things — but is especially appropriate for the priests who are ministers of what is sure — "They shall offer incense on (the occasion of) your wrath and satisfaction upon your altar. They shall teach your judgments to Jacob and your laws to Israel."[1] In these three ways of ministry the law-giver revealed how great the priestly rank is. When wrath is stirred up, it is abated by the fragrance of their prayers. When the people sin, the people are absolved by the satisfaction of their sacrifices. When teaching is required, their mind overflows and their tongue conveys the wisdom of the laws of the Giver of laws. Our Lord, as the Fulfiller of the testaments and the Teacher of perfect things, called the preachers and teachers of his Gospel the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world"[2], for like salt, as it were, they season and heal the tastelessness of those who are insipid-in-error, and like light they give light to the darkness of those who are prostrate-in-error. While giving admonition and orders he said, "But if salt should lose its savor, with what may it be re-seasoned? It can only be thrown outside and trampled underfoot by men."[3] Again, he threateningly warns, "For if the light of discretionary knowledge which has been given to you becomes darkness through your faithlessness and acquiescence in evil things, how much more will your darkness be reserved for you in Gehenna"[4], that is, if the absolvers and teachers deal falsely and perversely, who will teach those lacking (in knowledge), and who will pardon transgressors? For if he who bears the Lord's likeness mystically, or he who bears the angelic likeness typically, does not adapt the steps of his ways to the likeness of the original, that is, the archetype, he will doubtless be suspected by the simple as false to the truth, for he does not resemble an image-bearer. Let the disciples of the apostle therefore recall the reproach of the apostle, "You then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?"[5] And, "Lest I, who have proclaimed to others, myself should become outcast."[6] And, what is more fearful than these things, "My friend, how can you enter here when you do not have wedding garments? Bind his hands and feet, and cast him out to the outer darkness."[7] For it is reported to us that many priests and deacons have let go of the right and snatched the left, and they have been mindful of their bodies and neglectful of their souls, and they have accepted or dismissed wrongfully and unjustly, falsely and not uprightly, and have been devious in their doings and reckonings. Some others have turned aside from the pathway of the chaste and noble life-style suitable to the ministry which was entrusted {142} to them, and have been married impurely and illegally, and by reason of them the priesthood has been held in contempt, the rulership insulted, and Christianity dishonored. And the people become like the priest, for teachings have been weakened because of the laxness of the teachers.

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[1] ? for ܒܪܒܝܘܬܗ.

[2] ܟܬܒܐ for ܟܬܒܐ.

[3] ? for ܨܘܪܬܢܐܝܬ.

[4] 'Abdišo' has promises (ܫܘܘܕ̈ܝܐ for ܚܘܫ̈ܒܐ.)

[5] ? for ܕܝܢ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ ܨܒܝܢܐ ܬܒܥ ܠܗ̇: ܘܡܬܕܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܠܐܠܗܝܬ ܗܘ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܕܐ.

[6] Exo. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Mt. 15:4; 19:19; Mk. 7:10; 10:19; Lk. 18:20; Eph. 6:2.

[7] 1 Cor. 4:15.

[8] I.e., because of the "faculty" or "permission".

Therefore we teach and command all the ranks of standing by the "Word of our Lord" to dignify their whole life-style with honorable exemplars of manners appropriate to ministers and servants of Christ, and with a faithful conscience which is not self-despising, nor reproachable by him who knows what is hidden, which shame does not assail, and which mocking does not touch, that they may keep themselves mindful, without defilement, until the day of Christ, remaining, in their ministry and in their ways alike, (as) guides to the people entrusted to them in the pathways leading up to heaven. Whoever (so) observes and acts will have much confidence on the day of our Lord. But judgment and condemnation is reserved before the Judge of the ages for one who dares to be arrogant.

Sixth canon: Concerning the priests and faithful who venture to seize the vessels of the sanctuary and to plunder the resources of churches, monasteries, hostels, and bishops' houses.

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[1] Deut. 33:10.
[2] Mt. 5:13,14.
[3] Mt. 5:13.
[4] Perhaps a reference to Mt. 6:23.
[5] Rom. 2:21.
[6] 1 Cor. 9:27.
[7] Mt. 22:12,13.

It was then reported in the council of the fathers by persons who are worthy to be believed that there are men who are clothed with the honored religious garb and are named priests and deacons, and while on the outside they are pretentious, adorning themselves as though genuine, by their deeds they are strangers to the promises of the clergy. They are presumptuous toward the vessels of the sanctuary and seize and take (them) for themselves in a heathen manner, and do not tremble at the judgment of God, or at the reproaching voice of the preacher of the Gospel, "You, then, who contemn idols, do you rob the sanctuary?"[1] Again, others, priests and believers of a false name, plunder the resources of churches, monasteries, hostels, and bishops' houses, and when they are detected they make deeds — that is, spurious documents of falsehood — and the lands, vineyards, and whatever else has been set aside for the divine habitations are registered in their own names or in the name of their children. There are those who assign to themselves whatever they purchase with money from gifts and offerings such as the faithful have given as a present for the wiping out of their sins to places which are devoted to God, and they have plundered and stolen from the hands of God and have not been shaken, nor has their heart been rebuked.

These, then — these impudent ones diligent after their own harm — priests in name and fatuous believers — we teach and admonish by the "Word of our Lord", to return without delay the resources which were set apart for God, {143} that is, to the holy places to which they were designated, before chastisement suddenly falls upon them. If the properties were purchased in the name of priests and believers, or they were purchased in the name of divine habitations and their deeds of sale have fallen into the hands of certain Christians, let them return and give (back) the deeds with the properties, and they are not allowed to do otherwise, by the "Word of our Lord Christ." But if in their own name or that of their children the resources belonging to places of God's house have been bought, whether craftily, as (by) greedy persons, or faithfully, as (by) lovers of the Church, let them write a disclaimer [and return the deeds of sale and documents of disclaimer to the holy habitations] along with the properties of the holy places. All these things should be managed without dispute with the knowledge of the bishop who is governor of the diocese, and they are not allowed to do otherwise by the "Word of our Lord Christ." From now on all properties which are purchased for holy habitations shall be purchased in the name of the habitations. If this is not possible — in that, perhaps, affairs are not favorable for us[2] — whenever they are purchased in the name of others, those who purchased (them) should immediately sign a disclaimer of ownership. Whatever belongs to a church or monastery should be kept in the church or monastery in a secure place, or in the house of a trustworthy person who fears and reflects upon the day of Christ, and no Christian is allowed to do otherwise by the "Word of Christ." Whoever acts otherwise, may wrath remain upon him and upon his house for ever.

Seventh canon: concerning wicked heirs who treat wrongly a bequest of their departed, which they have set aside and given to God through holy habitations.

Steadfast believers, because they know truly that there awaits another world for permanent rewards, have set aside and given to God some of their resources, such as for the construction of, or for the enrichment and sustenance of, the holy temples of churches, monasteries, hostels, schools, and bishops' houses, that there may be for them a wiping away of their sins, an absolution of their souls, and preservation of their descendants, trusting that their deposits have been placed in the hands of God and his servants — so to speak, perishable possessions for imperishable possessions. Then they have departed from the earth and have taken hold of heaven. But the parents — who are venerable of memory — had faithless heirs who have canceled, on their own, the memorial of their parents and defrauded God of the property which was set apart for him. They have loosed and annulled the testament of their departed, which {144} kings, the leaders of the world, have not been permitted[1] by God, the Lord of kings, to change and annul, for upon this perfidy anathema is established in the canons of the fathers of old. This matter is mentioned in the divine book of the Acts in the story concerning Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, who dedicated their property to God, and some of the money of their offering they placed before the apostles, and some they concealed. They were in agreement, with one deceiving intention, to tempt the Spirit of the Lord. But the plunder was not concealed, for it was exposed by the head of the Twelve, the true Rock[2], and the man and his wife paid the recompense of their theft by sudden and terrifying death through the divine sentence of the apostle's decision. Inasmuch as those who gave and then stole did not escape the judgment, for they stole a devoted thing which once was set apart and lifted up to God, how much more will be the punishment of those who did not themselves give, but ventured to defraud and to appropriate the charge which was deposited with them?

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[1] Rom. 2:22.

[2] ܒܠܐ ܠܝܬ ܚܢܝܢ ܠܢ ܦܘܪ̈ܢܣܐ?

The synod of the fathers has commanded, then, with anathema and divine judgment, that any Christian who annuls the testaments of the departed — unless perchance either the dowry of a wife has been cheated by it, or an obligation to creditors has been cheated by it — and defrauds and deprives the divine habitations and the poor of any inheritance which true believers have set aside for them — anyone who appropriates any of these things — may not retain possession or leave it as an inheritance to sons or daughters, and he becomes an alien and anathematized by the "Word of Christ". And whoever subjects again servants who once were freed by their masters becomes excommunicated and rejected by the Church as one who steals free men and sells them. A proclamation shall be read concerning all these things which are mentioned above.

Eighth canon: concerning those who treat with contempt the prayer of the Church and scorn the reception of the Mysteries of Christ, and in the false garb of ascetics prefer roaming about without a habitation and take women round about with them, or men and women together dwell in one monastery.

Then it was said before the synod by prudent men that there are occasionally men who deceitfully clothe themselves in the honored garb of nazirites, ascetics, and religious. They roam about without a dwelling-place and insinuate themselves into villages and cities, scorning fasting, prayer, and reception of the holy Mysteries. Others, being even more base in their deception, take about with themselves women who are clothed in the garb of the religious. Others also venture to dwell together — men and women — in one monastery, and with all this deception and laxity believers are scandalized, {145} unbelievers mock, and instruction is hampered.

Therefore the synod has commanded and decreed by the "Word of God" that all those who clothe themselves with the garb of the religious and desire to live like a nazirite and in poverty should separate for themselves specific dwelling-places in the house of their parents, or with a cleric in the church, or with monks in a monastery. But if the love of teaching moves them to go where instruction in the Holy Scriptures is specially found, such as these, then, should be provided "letters of peace" by the bishop of their diocese, that they may the more recollect their thoughts from perversity and sin-inciting wandering. Let them continue in prayer and in the fasting of the Church, and in reception of the absolving Mysteries, being brought beneath the yoke of the apostolic and paternal ordinances, and let them be subject, either as clergy beneath the head of the clergy, or as students beneath the prefects, or (occupy themselves) in unashamed craftsmanship, or in undespised labor. No Christian is allowed, by the "Word of God", to scorn fasting, prayer, the reception of the Holy Mysteries, or any of the ecclesiastical ordinances. No one is allowed to take about with him a woman or to dwell with her in a monastery or cell, and women are not allowed to dwell in a monastery of men, nor are men allowed to dwell in a monastery of women, by the "Word of God". Whoever is caught doing otherwise will be stripped of the garb of the religious which he has put on unworthily, and he shall be bound and alienated, and every Christian who associates with him and helps him is anathema, and may the wrath of God come upon the helper and the helped. Let them not be pardoned until they turn from their licentiousness and live as it has been commanded. Women who are present in a monastery of men, or men who are present in a monastery of women may be kept for a short time in a secure place, far from the suspicion of laxity and unseemliness, to remain there — that is, either for one night or one day as the situation calls for — so that the name of God, or his teaching, might not be blasphemed, and the same shall receive correction at the undertaking of the bishops, while they either correct them as obedient children, or excommunicate them as disobedient children.

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[1] ܐܬܦܣܣܘ for ܐܬܦܣܝܩܘ.

[2] ܟܐܦܐ.

Ninth canon: concerning monasteries and habitations of hermits who break up[1] the ecclesiastical assemblies of Sundays and Feasts and teach laxness and roaming about to the simple.

In every way, then, Satan, the Enemy of our nature, contrives to confuse the mind of the simple children of the Church, {146} and to lead them astray by the hypocritical craftiness of seducers, so that even the desirable patterns of naziritehood and asceticism, which are cultivated righteously by the hardy of soul according to the laws of naziritehood, the Hater of the Church has perverted and, through the weak of soul, he has made them a stumbling-block to members of the household and a mockery to outsiders. Thus it was reported in the synod that there are monasteries in the land of Assyria and its neighboring places which are built outside of villages, some of men and some of women, and wantonly and uncircumspectly they go in and out to one another. Again, there is a hut which a certain woman dwells in, and men have been caught many times going in and out with her, and there was about them a suspicion (of) unseemliness which is foreign to nazirites.

Therefore, we decree and command by heavenly authority, as also according to the canon which was set down by us preceding this one, that women are not allowed to dwell singularly in a monastery or hut. Instead, if at all possible, there should not be a habitation of women. But if there has been, or is (such), many (women) should dwell in one habitation, that is, at least five or four, so that through the conversation appropriate to naziritehood laxness may be brought to an end among them. Anyone who ventures to transgress against this canon, which is full of modesty, is anathematized by the "Word of Christ". And no Christian is [allowed] to leave the ecclesiastical assemblies on Sundays or feast days on which the things of the Lord's economy are administered and go about wandering among monasteries and huts. But if one desires to pray or to make an offering in monasteries or huts, we do not hinder him if he does this on ordinary days and not on dominical days of the oblations and gifts of the catholic Church.

Tenth canon: concerning holy habitations of old which were built through the diligence of (men of) old and have become ruined through the neglect of later (men).

(Men of) old, then, who were zealous in the fear of God, set aside some of their resources and built churches and monasteries in the name of Christ for his service and praise, and for the pleasure of those who frequented (them). However, through the slackness and laxity of the children of our failing generation, a pretext has been given for the devastation of divine temples through the pillaging of their resources, and because of all this neglect punishments have increased upon the earth, and retribution has been extended without pity over the inhabitants of the earth, for there is no one among us who is acceptable to God, and (who) persuades (him) that the sword should return to its sheath.

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[1] For ܡܒܛܠܝ̈ܢ.

Therefore we command and teach all the faithful {147} to have a concern for the holy temples that they may not fall into ruin, and in those which have become desolate that they may be rebuilt, for in them praise ascends to God who is over all, and from them proceed healings and pardons for those who seek refuge in them. Anyone who does otherwise will become liable for divine judgment. The episcopal fathers should vigilantly look after the administration of these things.

Eleventh canon: concerning monasteries, that they may not be newly built unless sufficient income is set apart for them, lest they become desolate and a cause of scandal.

(Men) of old, then, according to the diligence which was stirred up in them to perfect the will of Christ, founded and established many monasteries in various places (which) now have gone to ruin through neglect, as we have written in the canon prior to this one.

Concerning this we make known and admonish that no Christian may build new monasteries without the knowledge of the bishop (who is) the governor of the diocese, and if he does build with the knowledge of the bishop, he must set aside and give to them sufficient income for their maintenance or for the reception of strangers. For he is better who endows ruined monasteries than he who builds new monasteries, without which . . . (?)[1]. Whoever ventures to (so) build, [but does not] set aside for them sufficient income for their maintenance — they shall not be hallowed until he provides for them and there is fulfilled in them everything we have commanded, and it may not be done otherwise, that scandals and derision may not be stirred up against us.

Twelfth canon: concerning those who do not give their gifts and offerings advantageously in the churches and monasteries of their own villages and cities, but vaingloriously in other places.

It was repeated, then, by many, as in a complaint before the synod, who were saying that many habitations, churches, and monasteries have become desolate for this reason: some of the faithful give their offerings and gifts, not according to ecclesiastical custom, but with a mind drawn to boasting in the manner of ostentatious (men), or because of a (wrong) supposition, like ignorant people, or for amusement, like young children. They lift up their money and they cry out, as though with a horn, and display it in the sight of the sun and moon, and do not place their gifts and offerings in their own churches and monasteries, but in distant places. For this reason many habitations have gone to ruin, and the more priests and the heads of priests teach and instruct them, they are not relieved of the {148} previous way of thinking which leads them astray. They have made themselves, so to speak, acephalous, like a crab which has no head, or autocephalous, self-governing in a contumacious manner and not as a disciple. They doubtless do not recognize that a gift which is (made) pridefully is fruitless, and what is (made) playfully is worthy of ridicule, and that which is (made) on account of a (wrong) supposition — that is, that yonder God hears better, or accepts more readily the petition of intercessors — is the opposite of perfect teaching, in which dubious ideas are brought to an end, for it was also said by our Lord to the Samaritan woman, "God is spirit, and those who worship him should worship in spirit and in truth."[1]

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[1] For ܛܒ ܡܢ ܗܘ̇ ܕܒܢܐ ܠܡܘܬܪܐ ܫܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܣܢܝܩܐ ܠܒܠܥܕܝܗܘܢ. The text is probably corrupt here: the parallel text in 'Abdišo' has "where there is no community of faithful that needs them".

Therefore we teach all children of the discipleship of life that they should commit and distribute their gifts and offerings to the divine temples near them. If, after they have given their gifts and offerings, everyone in his own village or town, they desire to go to visit other places, we do not hinder them, if they do this with an upright intention.

Thirteenth canon: Concerning chaste and lawful marriage which is comely to members of the household: they should be married as it has been commanded, lawfully and not as the beasts.

The divine teaching in the Old (Testament), then, as to the immature, and in the New, as to the mature, ordered through the prophets and apostles the honest and dignified life-style worthy of membership in the household; it likewise defined the law concerning orderliness, dignity, and matrimony, so that men may not be like the irrational beasts, to whom sin and righteousness are not imputed, but like rational (creatures), or rather that as members of the household, through the discipline of legislation, it may be easier for them to draw near helpfully or stand back warily, being diligent according to the will of God. For it is not right for them to confound marriage, which was given through the skillful design of the wisdom of the Maker for the establishment and transmission of the generations of our (human) nature, as though (they were) without law, by the transgression of law, like irrational (creatures). Instead, they should reject wantonness and love chastity in lawful marriage, in which the love of God toward the married and the love of the married toward each other are maintained alike, as that which at the beginning of creation was introduced along with the foundations of the world, and as was ordered in the Gospel by our Lord, and as (is) according to the orderly fashioning of the human body. For there is no body that has two heads, nor is there a head which has two bodies. As (there is) one Church for one Christ {149} and one Christ for one Church, which is his body — as it is written, "To him who is above all he granted (to be) head to the Church, which is his body"[2] — (so) there is no woman who has two husbands, in that nature and law would abhor her. And as it would be displeasing to the husband of a woman for a strange man to mount his couch and defile his bedding, so it is displeasing to the wife of a man for a strange woman to mount her bed and defile her bedding. Indeed, there is no house into which there has entered two or three women to marry one man where strife has not entered with them, and alienation . . .
. . . in the house[3], destroying conception — destroying life! — through the murderous envy of the Demon[4], the Violator of laws, like the enmity which existed in the house of the patriarch[5], and in the house of his grandson, and in the house of Elkanah, and in the house of the Psalmist of the Spirit, and in the house of his son, Solomon the wise, whose wives greatly turned aside his heart, and God became angry at his transgression, for in the divine narrations the injuries which sprang from disorderliness of marriage are told. For even if the care and providence of God looked away from the ancients, and they were joined to two or to many (women) because of their weakness, yet the coming of Christ, although upholding the first creation and the ordinance which was for the earlier men, also ordered the life which was appropriate to the ways of the mature, and enlightened the disciples of the Gospel concerning lawful marriage. We would necessarily have written about other things in regard to chaste and lawful marriage which are required for the regulation of those obedient (to the Gospel), had not these clearly been written in the divine Scriptures and paternal

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[1] Jn. 4:24.

[2] Eph. 1:22-23.

[3] There is a small lacuna in the ms; Chabot suggests [ܒܥܠܕ]ܒܒܘܬܐ (enmity) for ܒܒܝܬܐ.

[4] ?for ܒܒܝܬܐ ܡܚܒܠܬܐ ܒܛܢܐ ܡܚܒܠܬܐ ܚܝܐ ܒܚܣܡܗ ܘܩܛܘܠܐ ܕܫܐܕܐ.

[5] I.e., Abraham.

canons, and decreed inviolably, along with anathemas and curses which are joined to them. But they are also set down lucidly by the venerable (of) memory, Mar 'Aba the catholicos, in a synodical letter which he wrote concerning the ordinances of marriage to all ranks of Christendom, one of which we have quoted, that is, the one concerning two wives, agreeing to all of those detailed in (this) book and indicated in the canons: that is, no one is allowed by canon to divorce his lawful wife — except for adultery — and to be joined to another like a lascivious (man) who has no sense, whether for outward and corruptible beauty, or like a greedy (man) who is not satisfied, who attempts to acquire money, goods, and transitory properties. For these two reasons, that is, for outward beauty and for transitory possessions, the licentious and wanton have ventured to be joined to a step-mother, or to the wife of an uncle who is the wife of a father's brother, or to his[1] aunt who is the sister of his father, or to his aunt who is the sister {150} of his mother, or to his sister, his daughter-in-law, his daughter, his step-daughter, or to his wife's grand-daughter, like outsiders, or the wife of his brother like the Jews, or to an unbelieving woman like the pagans.

Concerning these things, by divine and paternal decision we also have decreed as we have been commanded: no one may transgress against these things by the "Word of God", but they are to be observed as profitable ordinances which are suitable for the conduct of spiritual life, according to those things which also are the teaching and commandments of our Lord, and everyone who keeps them is blessed by them, and everyone who transgresses against them is condemned by them.

Fourteenth canon: concerning those who apply themselves to the deception of divinations, auguries, incantations, knots, and charms, or follow one of the strange rites, or observe the twitching of bodies and the sound of birds.

Now then, divine teaching in all generations has taught and instructed men to acknowledge one God, the Creator and Author of all, and to serve and be subject to him, and to meditate in his laws to their own benefit and to the praise of his name. It has taught and admonished strongly that men should depart from those things by which their practitioners are harmed in soul, that is, from auguries, divinations, incantations, knots, and charms, (and) from all things alien to God. They are a shame, a disgrace, a condemnation, and the ruin of their practitioners — things which spring up by way of the cunning invention of the father of falsehood, by which those who are held captive by them are perplexed and confused. Others bear the likenesses of the bones of saints, or the (actual) bones of the saints, and they go round about and insinuate themselves into the houses of believers, but especially into the midst of lax women, and they bind and hang the merchandise of avarice on the neck of those who place them on their chains and in their pouches, and venture to place in the mouth and in the nostrils a rinse in which they have washed the bones, and oil in which they have placed the bones of martyrs. As a result of (all) this the cherished name of Christianity is blasphemed.

Therefore we decree by heavenly authority, that no Christian is allowed, by the "Word of God", to follow and accept the error of auguries, divinations, incantations, knots, and charms, or any of the alien rites. They are not allowed to observe the motion of bodies and the sounds of birds, or to venture to place in the mouth and nostrils of men the rinse or oil in which bones have been placed. They are not allowed, by the "Word of God", either to hang upon themselves the bones of saints or to keep (them) in their houses, but in places set aside for the blessed honor {151} of the bones of the saints — there they shall be placed, and there they shall be honored. The dishonor and contempt which came upon them because of ignorance and carelessness should never again happen to them, by the "Word of Christ".

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[1] Sic. There is a transition from the plural to the singular at this point

Fifteenth canon: concerning those who lend on interest and are greedy to increase their property through usury, which is alien to members of the household.

The divine Scriptures with great care warn and command the members of the household to keep themselves from the taking of interest, which is the fruit of sterility, being forced to bring forth while not naturally bringing forth, and many of the circumspect flee from this shameful thing, but even more we admonish those who deal in the iniquity which is called usury. The fathers of the Church have forbidden these things, according to the sense of the holy commandments, in the canons which they have set forth in synods which took place in various generations, for they perceived the fraud which was begotten from usury, which spreads and corrupts like a gangrenous cancer, consuming external substances[1] as well as the other members which are near its vicinity. For if property which is gotten justly is retained with difficulty, what can it profit a man to gain much, but condemn himself through offensive means? And if the righteous man with difficulty will be saved, how will the wicked man, the sinner, and the fraud find it to be possible? Because of the supplication of poor borrowers and because of the multitude of their necessities, even the leaders of the churches have often turned away from the rebuke and correction of money-lenders who charge interest moderately, for there are some who charge one percent per month, and some who have excelled even more in their benevolence, and again some who have the more abundantly excelled and have attained a high degree in their mercifulness, as those who know that they will not be rejected by him who said there will be mercies for the merciful. However, others, forgetting what is right, have dealt without pity, for they have set up interest upon principal immoderately, and have, with deliberation, charged high interest.

We therefore also teach and command as we have been commanded: no believer may take usury. However, if anyone is inclined to take interest while averting his eyes from that which is perfect, let him beware lest he again condemn himself, lending and taking shrewdly, like a greedy (man), who is not satisfied and does not gain (anything that endures)[2]. Anyone who ventures to go beyond measure like an unmerciful (man) condemns himself and brings contempt upon his household.

Sixteenth canon: concerning clergy and religious who attempt to increase their possessions through interest and usury.

We have set forth in general, then, for all {152} the members of the household, the helpful teaching which is comely and adapted to the life-style of members of the household, that they may not greedily desire to increase their property through the fraudulent[3] means of immoderate interest and usury, which is rejected by all the honest and upright. But now, being concerned about the exalted life-style which is appropriate for priests, we have commanded that a man who is in the ministry of the Church should be exalted in his ways in proportion to the exalted position of his ministry, and he should not at all deal in interest and usury, so that it may be easier for him, as a teacher of holiness, to teach others who are disciples of priests and of the heads of priests.

Seventeenth canon: concerning clerics who are suspended by bishops, [or bishops] and metropolitans who are suspended in the great synod

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[1] For ܩܢ̈ܝܢܐ ܢܘܟܪ̈ܝܐ.

[2] ?for ܢܦܫܗ ܒܪ ܡܣܬܒܪ ܥܡܠ ܦܘܪܣܐܢܘܬ ܐܝܟ ܥܢܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܣܒܥ ܘܠܐ ܡܩܢܐ
ܢܣܒ ܠܗܘܒ ܕܠܐ.

[3] ܡܠܒ̈ܢܐ for ܡܠܝܠܒ̈ܢܐ.

by the patriarch and the bishops with him, or by the patriarch alone when necessities require, or (a bishop)[1] by the metropolitan and fellow-bishops of his province.

The confusion and disorderliness, then, which has existed until now through the audacity of the contemptuous who have behaved arrogantly and have trodden underfoot a suspension and anathema which has been set forth against them — that is, by the bishops against clergy, or by a metropolitan and bishops against bishops who have transgressed, or by the patriarch alone when necessities and exigencies require (it) because of ecclesiastical affairs — we have decreed, by the "Word of God", that these things should no longer be, and from now on shall not be done, so that the Church may seek out what is virtuous and orderly to her, and that her boundaries may be strengthened within her, and that the laws and ordinances of the ecclesiastical rulership, which governs the affairs of all the rest of her ranks, might be no more confused. Whoever despises these things shall no longer be received among us, and shall be cast out of his rank and ministry until the signs of sorrow and regret for his transgression and contempt appear in him.

Eighteenth canon: concerning those who are anathematized, excommunicated, and utterly dismissed from the ministry of their priesthood, that they may not be received.

A bishop, then, or a metropolitan who once has been cut off and cast out by the great synod, or a presbyter or deacon by their bishop in a council of priests and deacons, as those who have been tried and convicted for their faults, no longer ought to be admitted to the ministry of which they were justly stripped, and there may no longer be mercies for them — {153} nor, indeed, when they go creeping round about and pestering and making helpers for themselves. There shall not be helpers for them, and they shall have no hope of being accepted, nor may a place for compassion be found for them. The prior confusions which came about through the rebellious and worthless may no longer be, such as brought about the confusion of the divine laws and paternal canons. Those who are excommunicated and dismissed by the sentence which once went out against them from the great synod may not again be admitted in ecclesiastical assemblies by another synod, but all those who also fellowship with them or help them shall receive the censure and suspension which corrects them, especially (if), after having learned the judgment which went out against them, they (still) venture to assist them. This edict concerning these things was decreed also in an earlier synod by the blessed fathers.

Nineteenth canon: concerning the person who is set apart and chosen to be an archdeacon, that is, the head of the ministry, and concerning the affairs and orders which are committed into his hands by the command of his bishop.

The ministry of an archdeacon before the bishop at the head of the ministry of clergy is necessarily required, then, at all hours of service and ecclesiastical assemblies, and as it is not right for churches to be left without the leadership of the bishop, who is the head of the Church, so it is not right for the archdeacon to forsake the hours designated for the service and for ecclesiastical assemblies. It is well for every bishop to have an archdeacon in the church of his see. But the person who is designated for the ministry of the archdiaconate should be wise, eloquent, of a good disposition, just, merciful, and capable in the service and liturgies of the Church. He should be in charge, according to the will of the bishop, at all hours over all the orders of ministry[2], seating the presbyters upon the benches, ordering the ranks of deacons, taking precautions concerning the doors of the church, designating the readers of the Scriptures, dispensing the weeks, and appointing the presbyter who reads the Gospel and consecrates the sacrament, except when the bishop is in charge, who has authority to do as he chooses. But the archdeacon shall look after the affairs of the church, and without his advice and command the clergy {154} may not go into the country. Every presbyter, deacon, or sub-deacon who is in the city but not grievously ill, and there is no other pressing necessity, either of canon or his own will, and he is not found among the ranks of his colleagues at the hours of prayer, but being scornful, leaves the people and the congregation of the bema and sits within the sacristy, or goes home or to his work, the same shall become liable for censure and suspension. Also, great watchfulness and care is useful for the archdeacon, that he may fulfill his ministry watchfully and without neglect, strenuously and without laxness, so that he may be a good example to his fellow-clergy as well as to many, and may be, in the practice of his ministry, like a lamp before the bishop and before the whole Church, and a judge among the clergy, that is, between a man and his colleague, or between the leaders of the Church, or the children of the Church, with one another. He shall listen and bring resolution among them, and if necessary, he shall gather the heads of the churches to listen and bring resolution along with him. The clergy of the churches are not allowed to rise up and cause schism against the heads of the churches, and the heads of the churches are not allowed to administer the affairs of the Church alone, or the members of the church to anathematize their presbyters without the fellowship of the presbyters of the (same) church. If a matter between them is difficult, let it be brought to the archdeacon. If it is especially difficult, let it be brought to the bishop that it might receive resolution by him, and no one who is subject to orders may transgress against these ordinances by the "Word of God".

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[1] I have inserted "bishop" here in order to make sense of the heading.

[2] Or "liturgical services".

Twentieth canon: concerning the holy habitations of churches, monasteries, and hostels: that with the knowledge and by the command of the bishop, the head of the diocese, they should be entrusted to those who govern them.

It was reported in the synod of fathers that some priests and deacons venture to seize the supplies of the holy habitations of churches and monasteries without the knowledge and command of the bishop. These, in their contentiousness and fury, for their own support and that of their family, have seized the offerings of holy habitations which are designated for the supplies of those who belong to the habitations and for the supply of the needy who visit (them).

Concerning this, we have commanded by heavenly authority that none of the presbyters, deacons, or faithful is allowed, by the "Word of God", without the knowledge and command of the bishop, to seize the rulership of holy habitations or to plunder the resources which are due the habitations; instead, by the command and will of the bishop, {155} with the counsel and advice of upright and honest (men), an honest and diligent person shall be chosen who is suitable for leadership and for the ministry, and either the church, or the monastery, or the hostel shall be committed to him to administer. Whoever ventures to do otherwise shall become anathema, and may the wrath of God remain upon him.

Twenty-first canon: concerning those who gather and associate with one another in order to bind an oath and to rise up against rulers and denounce their colleagues.

This also was reported in the synod of the fathers: there are some who in their contentiousness gather and ally themselves with each other, conspiring and swearing oaths, (which) they sign and seal, and mixing and drinking (wine), and sprinkling salt, that they will not turn away from their mutual assistance, and they denounce their colleagues in a foreign court in order to destroy them. Others make a covenant which is alien to love, that they will not eat, drink, or associate with one another, and they attempt to uproot the law of love from its foundations through the machinations and envy of the Adversary of love.

Therefore we have decreed, by the "Word of our Lord", that no Christian, from now on, is allowed to do any of these things, that is, to conspire, swear oaths, or rise up against rulers, or to gather in hostility to eat, or drink, or associate with his colleague in enmity toward another in order to harm him, or to accuse his colleague before judges in order to destroy him, or for Christians to withhold themselves from love and peace toward one another. Whoever ventures to turn aside in order to trample underfoot these things which are here helpfully commanded, may anathema and the wrath of God come upon him.

Twenty-second canon: that the leaders of the Church should command that the property of orphaned children should be carefully guarded.

It is right, then, that the properties of those who are left orphans by their parents should be guarded with care with the knowledge and by the command of the bishop, being entrusted to one concerning whom there is good testimony, who is reliable and does not plunder, and may be trusted to guard the resources of the children until they come of age and to turn them over to them without loss or detriment. However, they should particularly not be left in the hands of a step-father, who will consume and dissipate them, unless perchance the step-father is attested to by the bishop of the diocese, or by the priests and faithful who live near him or are in his neighborhood. Let no one do otherwise.

{156} Twenty-third canon: That it is not right for ranks of standing to act as a steward, foster parent, or advocate in a lawsuit not their own, and henceforth may not marry divorced (women).

We have spoken often, then, and have revealed in various ways that the exalted lifestyle appropriate to the exalted ministry requires of the ranks of standing, the ministers of the New Testament, that they adorn themselves with excellence, not with the likeness of faithful laymen, but as those who have attained a higher degree with God and have been more exalted in the reception of grace. It should be urgent for them to be attested, not alone by ranks and teaching, but even more by their deeds. They should not be teachers of others but not of themselves. They should not become like the blind (man) who grasps the lamp and gives light to others while he is deprived of the pleasure of light. It was then related before the council of the fathers that some clergy — not abiding by the order of their ministry, and not being persuaded to remain in the chastity of their ranks, which are a spiritual service — attempt to take interest from believers and unbelievers, and have taken the oversight of young women, and have been hindered from a spiritual ministry. Others have attempted to become stewards and managers in worldly affairs, and have forgotten that they are stewards of the spiritual ministry. Others have hired themselves out to be advocates in lawsuits not their own and to engage in business in their shameful and eternally condemning greediness. Each and every one of these things is a hindrance to the divine service which has been entrusted to priests by the Lord of priests. Others have ventured to marry divorced women who have been accused of disgraceful things, and they have become, carelessly, because of fleshly lust, a scandal and insult to many.

We therefore teach and command that from now on priests and deacons and religious may not charge interest, nor hire themselves out in advocacy in a lawsuit not their own. They may not become stewards for anyone because they are stewards of the Lord of angels and men. Henceforth they may not marry divorced (women) who are accused of shameful things, for if (in the case of) a man who retains a lawful wife, when she has been reviled because of adultery, he is commanded to divorce her and avoid her intimacy, how much more, indeed, is it proper for the ranks of standing to avoid all those things which are despised and alien to the order of their ministry. When, with someone holding the work of the dominion of a kingdom, it is (considered) a disgrace for him to act as steward {157} for someone else, how can the stewards of Christ and fathers and nurturers of his disciples, turn to another work alien to the divine service, which has been committed to them (as) to the wise — an indication that they should keep themselves carefully, without stain? From now on all who are numbered in the ranks of standing may not even be joined to other divorced women — those who are not accused of shameful sin — so that they may be free from abuse and evil intent. If there is anyone who in his madness takes a divorced woman who has been reviled because of fornication, and it is proved that she is legitimately accused, and he is in one of the ranks of the clergy, he may not retain her, and it is not lawful to do otherwise, by the "Word of God."

Twenty-fourth canon: concerning a wife whose husband dies, and he made a will but did not give instructions concerning the dowry of his wife, whether she has authority over her own dowry.

Let us now speak concerning this as well: whether a woman has authority over her own dowry after the death of her husband. We think, then, that (it is) just and right that this should obtain and be transmitted among Christians like the rest of the other laws with one opinion and with mutual counsel: a woman has authority over her own dowry, both during the life and at the death of her husband, even if he does not give instruction concerning it in a will, and neither administrators[1] nor heirs have control over it without the will of its mistress — (even) if there is (some) necessity which is difficult and overturns the canons, which may not be argued before the guardians of the canons[2]. Also, if from his property her husband bequeathed to her, like one of his male heirs, some gift, but it is not a complete share, she has authority over her dowry and over the gift which he bequeathed her alike. But if the portion bequeathed to her is like one of the male heirs or like one of the daughters, she should take the portion bequeathed her while dividing her dowry among the heirs. If she refuses to take a portion, and consents to her dowry alone, this is her choice. But if the portion which her husband bequeaths her for the sustenance of her life only as long as she lives — not as the inheritance which is fully due her, which she also has control over at the time of her death — she may bequeath to whomever she wishes, so all the more does she have authority over her dowry as an inheritance belonging to her alone. And concerning these things one opinion ought to obtain among all ecclesiastical congregations, as that which fulfills justice and frees from censure and injury.

Twenty-fifth canon: that Christians are not allowed to go to feasts of other religions {158} and celebrate with them.

We have heard, then, that some Christians, either for lack of knowledge or for lack of caution, go to other religions and take part with them in their feasts, that is, celebrating with Jews or with heretics or with pagans, or they accept something which is sent to them from the feasts of other religions.

We have commanded, therefore, by heavenly authority, that no Christians are allowed to go to feasts which are not Christian, nor are they allowed to accept something sent to Christians from their feasts, for it is a gift from something which is set apart for their sacrifice.

Twenty-sixth canon: That bishops and metropolitans who are called to a synod are not allowed to be hindered from going.

Metropolitans and bishops, then, who are called to a synod may not scorn the synod nor refuse to go, for if they know how to teach, profit is gained from them, and if they have need to learn, profit is added to them along with the reforms which communally take place in the church through the synod. But if there is any metropolitan or bishop who is called by the synod and is scornful and does not go without a reason of pressing necessity both canonical and acceptable, and it is learned after it is investigated that such is the case, by a communal sentence he shall be suspended from his ministry until he corrects himself and shakes off and casts away from himself his contempt and sloth, lest by reason of him there may be harm to the whole community.

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[1] ?ܟܪܛܠܪ̈ܐ. Perhaps, ܟܪܛܘܠܪ̈ܐ.

[2] ?for ܐܢ ܡܛܠܬܐ ܕܩܫܝܐ ܘܡܗܦܟ ܠܩܢܘܢ̈ܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܬܘܪܚ ܠܡܣܒܠ ܢܛܪ̈ܝ، ܩܢܘܢ̈ܐ.

Twenty-seventh canon: concerning Christians who are united in marriage with those who are from other religions, or commit feasts in their villages into the charge of heretics, or receive a blessing from them.

It is meet and right for the steadfast that in everything they should be observant with purity, while being wary of the error of the teachings of vain religions. They should not entrust either their sons or daughters to their nuptials and crowning, but should be careful to ascertain from them whether they first consent to follow the truth. They must not hand over the holy altars of Christ to the service of heretics, and they should not receive blessings which are not blessings. If any Christian {159} does otherwise, he shall receive a rebuke worthy of his contempt and will endure the canonical penalty which is clearly set forth in the synod of the early fathers.

Twenty-eighth canon: that it is not right for clergy to eat, to drink, or to lay (about) in club rooms or taverns.

It was reported, then, that some of the clergy, neglecting the order which is due to their ministry, which is full of dignity and despises the superfluities of vainglory and intemperance, go in to shops and taverns to eat and to drink there immoderately, and they lounge in club rooms like the disorderly.

Concerning this we have decreed by the "Word of God" that clergy and religious are not allowed to enter shops and taverns, or to lounge in club rooms. Whoever ventures to do otherwise shall become anathema by the "Word of God".

Twenty-ninth canon: concerning the orders and ranks of ecclesiastical ministries, and concerning the honor which is owed by the lower to the middle, and by the middle to the upper, and by the upper to him who is placed higher than all canonically and paternally.

Now, therefore, since the setting forth of these canons, which is helpful to leaders and to the led, has been completed through heavenly support, let us turn, with the permission of our Lord, to making known concerning the orders, and the honor of the rulers of the Church, particularly concerning the election of the head of the fathers, and concerning all the ecclesiastical affairs which are entrusted in his hands and are derived from him, so that in this canonical writing of ours the order of ranks and stations which are in the Church may also be made known. As the order which obtains and serves in the economy above through angelic activity, in which Rulers, Dominions, and Thrones are appointed, (there is) one who ministers above all by the command of the Orderer of all — so also in the lower economy, in worldly administration, which is divided among many and managed by one who is higher than the many — it is the same too in the ecclesiastical economy, through the operation of grace, which our Lord and Life-giver, Jesus Christ, ordered in the beginning by the choice of his Twelve. He empowered them as patriarchs to hold the supreme order totally, that is, catholically and paternally, being supplied for the sake of the lower orders, for he separated and sent them for the instruction and regulation of the people and the peoples[1]. And because of the abundance of his teaching, he further chose for his ministry of teaching another band of seventy as well, that is, the seventy apostles, who were the second after the first and the middle after the highest, like {160} metropolitans and bishops after patriarchs and catholicoi. And after his resurrection and ascension and the descent of the grace of the Spirit, he separated presbyters and deacons as the third after the second, enriching the church with primary, secondary, and tertiary administrators, according to the riches of the gift which was granted to her by the rich fountain of grace, through the ordination of teachers and fathers from the fire of the apostles which blazed and was handed down and is handed down unfailingly, from his first appearance to his last appearance. But after the first and second[1] slept, the Holy Spirit arranged sees and thrones in various places because of the distribution of the fathers. He designated four patriarchs in the western region in order to arrange through their hands all the primacies there, along with the ranks subjected to them. And he designated a fifth patriarch for the eastern region, that, as those four primacies of the children of the sunset ordered and administered the ranks of priests and Christians there, so too this primacy of the children of the sunrise was given to set in order the region, the chief of regions, for the peoples who were made disciples of the truth. The same, while resplendent in the true faith, holding the noble and apostolic scepter of the mother of primacies in the likeness of Peter, the head of the Twelve, and in the likeness of Paul, the master-builder of the churches, all those who minister rulership and the paternal sees are obedient to its paternal primacy, that is, the metropolitans and bishops to whom the ecclesiastical ranks are committed. And as priests, visitors, and chorepiscopoi — the members of the bishop's administration — are not allowed to transgress against the command and anathema of the bishop who holds the primacy of his entire diocese, so the metropolitans, the heads of the provinces, and the bishops, the heads of the dioceses, are not allowed to resist or transgress against the word, command, and anathema of the patriarch, the head of fathers, who ministers canonically and paternally, whenever he commands them according to the will of Christ concerning ecclesiastical affairs, so that the Christian flocks may not become like flocks without a shepherd, since all ecclesiastical matters are no more ordered (by themselves) than any (of the clerical) orders[2]. For thus it pleased the Holy Spirit to distribute all orders, and one higher than all of them who orders the orderers and the ordered, and they are joined to him as members to the head, from which flows intelligence and in which is also understanding, one of which guards the impulses and natural thoughts that they may not wander, and the other of which guards the senses and the bodily members that they may not be harmed. So too, from the head of the churches flow the priestly ranks prudently, and from him originate the {161} ordinary governments paternally. In regard to this, it is commanded canonically that at his consecration three or four metropolitans shall gather, there being with them two or three bishops from their own provinces. The metropolitans and bishops with them shall gather when they are summoned by writings from the bishops of the great province, and from the archdeacon and the heads of the churches and renowned faithful of the two cities of Maḥoze[3]. When the metropolitans and the bishops with them come, the election shall be examined in a common council of priests and faithful from the cities of Maḥoze in the presence of the bishops of the great province, and there will be designated by them, in an election which is far from prejudice and respect of persons, and is not reprehended by God, a person who is suitable and competent to govern the patriarchal see and the primacy, the mother of primacies. Then they will present him and make him known to the metropolitans and bishops who have been called, that he may complete without delay his consecration.

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[1] I.e., Jews and Gentiles.

On this matter we were all agreed, that is, I, the patriarch, and the metropolitans and bishops, as friends of the order and tranquillity of the faithful Church, and as friends of the honor of Christendom and of the primacy which is in it, and we commanded and decreed by heavenly authority, that these things shall so obtain in the Church, and we decreed that whoever from the metropolitans, bishops, priests, and faithful scorns, reviles, and will not obey everything which, according to the will of Christ, is commanded or decreed by the patriarch, all of us anathematize him, whoever he may be, and we consider him alienated from his ministry and his rank, by the "Word of Christ", until he amends himself, is corrected, and is sorry for his offense and submits to the ecclesiastical primacy. No one is allowed to do otherwise by the "Word of God".

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[1] I.e., the Twelve and the Seventy.

[2] ?for ܒܪ̈ ܠܐ ܡܬܛܟ̈ܣܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܥܕܬܢܝ̈ܬܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܠܛܟ̈ܣܐ.

[3] I.e., Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

It is right for us, therefore, to make this known as well, for the greater enlightenment of those who happen upon this book: one priest is not allowed to suspend his fellow-priest, nor a bishop his fellow-bishop, nor a metropolitan his fellow-metropolitan, nor bishops their metropolitan without the command and writs of the patriarch. Nor may a metropolitan alone, without the bishops of his province, either all of them or the majority of them, suspend one of the bishops of his province without the command of the patriarch. Also, the patriarch, with the participation and presence of one of the bishops, may suspend bishops and metropolitans who transgress and are in need of censure and correction. But if, perchance, necessities and difficulties call, he by himself, {162} for the sake of ecclesiastical administration or because affairs are troubled, is allowed justly to suspend any of the metropolitans or bishops. If a priest, therefore, transgresses, let his bishop investigate him justly. If he is guilty, let him lawfully charge him, making known to him the category of his charge. A priest is not allowed to venture to transgress against the authority of an episcopal anathema. But if, then, a bishop transgresses, his metropolitan should make it his concern to call the bishops of the province, either all of them or the majority of them, and he with them and they with him should investigate him justly and charge him lawfully, making known to him the category of his charge. A bishop is not allowed to venture to transgress against the authority of the anathema of a synod which is placed upon him. But if he says that he[1] governs by force, it is right, then, for the patriarch to conduct an investigation in a synod[2]. If a metropolitan should transgress, the bishops of the province should inform the patriarch by their writings, and if everything is not natural and in order, the patriarch should call the accused, the accusers, and the bishops of the province to his presence by letters. If not, let him write to a metropolitan who is in (the accused's) vicinity, who, with the bishops of his own province — all of them, or at least three — should investigate and bring judgment between them justly. They should inform the patriarch concerning the vindication or condemnation, and he, in justice and in the fear of God, should command what is needed to be administered. The bishops and metropolitans are not allowed to impede in any way an anathema which is appointed by the patriarch, nor remove it without his command and knowledge, so that the orderliness of the ranks of the Church might be manifest, and confusion may not enter into the affairs which are set in order in ecclesiastical government through the operation of the Holy Spirit in all regions.

Thirtieth canon: concerning the council of the bishops of the provinces which takes place with the metropolitan, or of the metropolitans and bishops with the patriarch.

It is commanded and decreed by the blessed fathers in previous canons concerning how the council of bishops with their metropolitan, and of the metropolitans and bishops with the patriarch, ought to take place, and we too have decreed and are persuaded of the order and decree which was set down by the blessed fathers. It is not right for bishops or metropolitans to transgress against it, and whoever among them scorns {163} and transgresses against the times established in the canons shall become worthy of rebuke and shall be in suspension from his ministry until he comes before the patriarch and corrects his offense. If a matter should arise, and it appears to the patriarch that the metropolitans and bishops should gather because of something which is pressing, whether all of them or part of them, between the times decreed by the men of old, this should be done with a good will, no one resisting his summons. If any of the metropolitans and bishops scorns and resists these things, he shall be in suspension from his ministry until he comes to the patriarch and corrects his offense as he is commanded by him.

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[1] Presumably the metropolitan and head of the provincial synod.

[2] ?for ܒܣܘܢܗܕܘܣ ܕܢܒܨܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܚܝܠ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܘܬܗ ܕܗܘ ܕܐܦܛܪܘܦܘܬܐ ܐܡܪ ܕܝܢ ܐܠܐ.

Šem'on, the bishop metropolitan of the Nisibites, and the bishops of his province, [and Grigor, bishop metropolitan of Rew-'Ardašir and the bishops of his province], who were called, each two times, by writings, were scornful and did not come, like people who do not know their own advantage and the advantage of their flocks, and did not tremble or fear the judgment which is reserved for scornful pastors and neglectful stewards. If in this same eighth year of the accession of this merciful lord they do not choose to come and correct their offenses, they shall be in suspension — and (indeed) they are (even now) in suspension by all of us from their ministry — until they come to the patriarch and repent and are corrected canonically, and seal these canons like all the fathers.

Thirty-first canon: the settlement of the agreement which the fathers made concerning the keeping of these canons.

We decided, then, to speak out and place this, which is necessary, at the end of these canons as well: because the establishment of these canons is in accord with, and also is agreeable to, the will of God, and there is much advantage from them for the readers and hearers, we thought about this, with common counsel, and we commanded that all of us should earnestly acquire them in writing, and should read them in assemblies of our flocks once each year for the benefit of the ecclesiastical assemblies. We should not give opportunity to Satan, who in his customary envy attempts to keep back permanent benefits from the disciples of Christ. Whoever is scornful concerning this, as if to hate the benefit of himself and of his flock, shall receive the censure of those above him. However, recompense shall come to him from our Lord, Christ, which is worthy of his faithlessness. But whoever is persuaded to read them and to be attentive to them shall be blessed in this world, and shall have boldness in the world to come with those who have served well.

{164} The blessing of the bishops who established these canons.

May the blessing of the Lord, which enriches and with which there is no grief, be upon the authors, possessors, and keepers of these canons which are helpfully established according to the will of Christ by the holy and peaceful synod, which by the permission of the divine will and the authority of royal command gathered and defined such things as are set down above. May the mercies of immortal God, of Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who died, and lives, and has given life to all, and of the living and holy Spirit be upon the catholic Church, upon the glorious kingdom, the queen of kingdoms, upon the entire[1] world, and upon everyone who possesses the lamp of these canons, which are profitable for the life of the souls of those who keep them. Amen.

The names, therefore, of the metropolitans and bishops who gathered in this synod are these:

Išo'yahb, the catholicos patriarch.
Barz, metropolitan of Beit Huzaye.
Šem'on, metropolitan of the Maišanites.
Yausep, bishop of Kaškar.
Yausep, bishop of Ḥirta.
Gosišo', bishop of Beit Nuhadra.
Dawid, bishop of Hormizd-'Ardašir.

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[1] ܣܟܗ ܡܢ for ܣܟܐ.

Ṭimate'os, bishop of Beit Bagaš.
'Abraham, bishop of Zabe.
'Esṭapanos, bishop of Šoštere.
Qamišo', bishop of Maḥoze dAriwan.
'Ador-Hormizd, bishop of Šuš.
Baršabta, bishop of Ma'alta.
Gabril, bishop of Ḥarbgelal.
Boktizad, bishop of Taḥal.
Barnun, bishop of Ḥalwan.
Natniyel, bishop of Sirzor.
{165} 'Abraham, bishop of Ṭarihan.
Papa, bishop of Mihr-Ganqarag.
Milis, bishop of Šenna.
'Ananišo', bishop of Ram-Hormizd.
Mar-'Aba, bishop of Nineveh.
Klilišo', bishop of Beit Ṭebyata and Kartwaye.

And for Ḥnana, metropolitan of the Assyrians, Mar 'Aba the presbyter and his archdeacon, attested.
For Grigor, metropolitan of Marw, Marq the presbyter, who was sent by him.
For Gabril, metropolitan of Haryo, Daniyel the presbyter, who was sent by him.
For Ḥabib, bishop of Pošig, 'Eliša' the deacon who was sent by him.
For Gabril, bishop of Badisai and Qadistan, Sargis the deacon who was sent by him.
And those who affirmed by their writings:
Mar Boktišo', metropolitan of Beit Garmai.
Gabril of Karka dMaišan.
Sabrišo' of Lašom.
Malkizdeq of Rima.
Muše of Nhargor.

These canons of the holy synod are ended, which are in number thirty-one, composed by the holy Mar Išo'yahb, catholicos patriarch of the East.

Again, the canons of the same Mar Išoʻyahb the catholicos, which he composed for Ya'qob, bishop of the island of Darai, when he wrote to him to appoint him (to office)[1] in writing.

First, a copy of the letter:

To the reverend and gracious priest, the elect bishop, Mar Ya'qob, pastor of the island of Darai, residing in the vicinity of Talon, in the vicinity of Ruḥa, your friend — praying {166} for your life, that it may be preserved and pleasing to God — Išoʻyahb, who by the will and command of God our Life-giver, is bishop patriarch in our Lord, our Hope, who makes wise the baptized, that they may please him through the fulfillment of his laws, sends greetings.

Your love toward God, O friend of God, is greatly demonstrated by your love for your flock, for you attempt assiduously to please the Chief Shepherd by diligence toward his flock, for the sake of whom he gave himself according to his dominical promise to them. For more than the care which the sons of the earth, the lovers of earthly things, show toward earthly goods which fly away, vanish like a dream, and do not endure, the lovers of heavenly things, those summoned to heaven — or rather, the Christian shepherds of the rational flocks, as leaders of the community — are commanded to concern themselves, with a mind which is watchful and wary and by no means faint, with those things which belong to piety, which is the cause of all our benefits which endure and do not pass away, for thus, to the best of their abilities, the two of them will keep the two things: that is to say, the earthly (will be able to keep) that which is earthly temporarily, and the godly that which is divine unendingly.

Indeed, it is clear that wrong (actions)[2] in their abundance lead to greater sin, and right (actions)[3] in their abundance justify all the more, for the former drag (a person) down while they are multiplying, but are left behind after they have been acquired, but the latter justify while they are multiplying, but follow their possessors in blessedness, undamaged (and) without end. Therefore care for the love of true teaching is necessarily required of those who are baptized into the truth — but especially of priests and the heads of priests, the ministers of the Mysteries of the baptized — for this, through acquaintance with it, brings promised blessings to its friends, for it is a treasury, so to speak, of the varied kinds of propitiating righteousness, which seasons the hearts of its possessors with the salt of the Lord's covenant, and expels the corruption of the sores of transgression. It gives wisdom to those instructed by it, that they may in no way turn aside or depart in any respect from the pathways trodden out to heaven in the footsteps of Jesus our Life-giver, who descended from heaven as God without removal or transition, when he shone forth from the holy Virgin, and ascended to heaven from the lowest parts of the earth, to his Sender, and again shone forth from the heaven of his Sanctuary as God in the clothing of his bodily nature for the renewal of the world and the salvation of creatures. For in the same way, therefore, the Holy Scriptures necessarily stir up a love of the doctrine of life in the Torah of the company of Moses and in the Gospel of the company of our Lord, the first of which was sealed with the mute blood of dumb beasts temporarily, and the other of which was sealed and validated unendingly with the living blood of the Renewer of all, which speaks better than that of Abel, propitiating and pardoning all in all. With the fire of his love they have been set aflame {167} — everyone who is upright and trustworthy in teaching, and is zealous but not harsh, for everyone who is occupied with the love of teaching, mindfully and not perfunctorily, steadfastly and not superficially, truly and not with false appearance, is enabled to be well-pleasing and satisfying, and to do many things well, and to draw near to God.

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[1] I.e., the normal "completion" letter required of the catholicos-patriarch.

[2] For ܣܟܠܘܬ ܒ̈ܢܝܐ.

[3] For ܡܟܝ̈ܢܘܬ ܒܢܝܐ.

You too, then, while bearing and emulating the adversities of those who were pleasing and did well, whom the one who chose them called the "salt of the earth"[1] which seasons the tastelessness of the insipid in error, and the "light of the world"[2] which gives light to those fallen in the depths of the darkness of error, the gloominess of teaching which is alien to the truth — while thus persisting, then, as you have been commanded, in the footsteps of the true fathers — have written to us questions concerning pressing matters, and have asked us to compose a reply for you in writing answering them. We, then, because we are constrained by the petition of your love, without delay are replying to your questions truly, even if feebly, which inquire after priestly ordinances and the ecclesiastical canons of the ministry of the ways of the Spirit.

Now we desired to write briefly concerning all the ecclesiastical canons, but because your love asked us concerning these things (in particular), we have written to you concerning only these things, which we do not think that any of our fathers, teachers, or brothers have (heretofore) written about in sequence. But we wish you to know also that, when in the great school we reached the acme of instruction, at the request of the episcopal fathers and renowned brothers, we wrote clearly and distinctly concerning how a priest ought to approach absolving baptism, and the offering up of the divine oblation in the fearful and priestly ministry which propitiates God and absolves the baptized, while adding very briefly to each matter its explanation. For while we write according to the apostolic tradition which was handed down to us through the teachers and fathers, we suppress other traditions, those which, however and by whomever, have entered into and have been received in various places, and have been retained by the unwary, who took from those who were not learned or trained, the humbug of whose tradition (is) a vehicle with which to mislead many who are easily carried off. But those who have learned as disciples in the correct sense are trustworthy, teaching magisterially, for without contempt they have in lowliness laid hold of the magisterial and paternal teaching, that which for some time had been proclaimed evangelically in all that is beneath heaven, for a witness of every rational being, for the pride of every baptized (person), (and) for the renewal of all that is made.

The holy lessons, which were written[3] by the pen of skilled scribes, are full of the wisdom of God, from which leaders are enabled, by their teachings and by their love, and ascetics by their obedience and by their love[4], to fulfill the will of him who shone forth from the {168} sealed womb of the holy Virgin, committed his laws to his baptized, committed his flocks to his pastors, and (now) shines forth from the heaven of his sanctuary, avenging his laws and avenging his flocks. Thus mighty and admonitory laws were established by the apostle of the nations, the godly Paul, the scribe of the New Testament, knowledgeable in the mysteries of Christ, in ecumenical letters, especially in the ones he wrote to his spiritual offspring, Timothy, his disciple and fellow-worker, the bishop of Asia[5].

But we give answer to your questions, not as they were written by you, but as we have arranged them in order, for some of them have priority over the others, and some of them require an inseparable connection as though they were one.

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[1] Mt. 5:13.

[2] Mt. 5:14.

[3] ܟܬܝܒܝܢ for ܟܬܒܝܢ.

[4] ܒܚܘܒܗܘܢ for ܒܚܘܒܗ.

[5] For ܐܣܝܘ.

First question: The first of all your questions is this: when the priest draws near to consecrate, how does he begin and what does he say, and what is the order of the sealing of the Mysteries?

Answer to the first question: Fear for himself, then, and for all the people rests upon the priest at the fearful hour in the fearful place during the fearful work — what is buried figuratively is raised to life in reality, and resurrected mystically[1] — for the priest is commanded to pray for himself and for all the people, and to lift up the request of all hearts which believe. For the priest of the New Testament labors in the spiritual craft of absolving sacrifice in the Lord's sanctuary, and he is the propitiator of the God of all and the absolver of the community through the ministry of his mediatorship. He is commanded to stand watchfully, without negligence, and purely, without spot, so that there may not be a blot on his ministry to the condemnation of himself and for a stumbling-block to those who believe, for he bears the icon of our Lord and fills the place of his ministry. He draws near fearfully and purely, recognizing the glory and height of his ministry, which is cherished and revered even more than (that of) the watchers on high, and at which fierce and rebellious demons tremble and shake.

After he draws near and kneels, he stands and salutes the altar, and at once salutes and blesses the people, saying, "Peace be with you", a word of command to purify and cleanse all hearts from all evils, and to stand in the Christian temple as though in heaven. He will receive from the people the reply of "peace" as well, while they confess that there is nothing alien to their faith among them. They say, "With you and with your spirit." At once he adds, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of us." With the apostolic phrase he bows, praying that these things may happen for each one who is baptized. Then he says other things according to the sequence of {169} ecclesiastical order, things which you did not ask about or include in the series of your questions, since they are well-known and said in all the churches of God. But at the end of each series of sections, with his tongue duly glorifying, he signs with his hand canonically over the divine Mysteries the sign of the dominical cross. When he finishes the three sections he draws near to sign — not as you wrote, but as we write — lifting up upon his hands the upper host, kissing (it) and placing (it) upon his eyes. And fixing his mind and his eyes upon heaven, he says, "Glory to you, O living and life-giving Bread, who descended from heaven that those who eat you may not die." And he begins to break, and while breaking says, "I thank you, O Lord God, Lord of heaven and earth, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that though I am wretched and unworthy, you have accounted me worthy in your grace to offer the fearful, holy, and divine Mysteries of the body and blood of your Christ, that I may minister to your people and the flock of your pasture absolution, the forgiveness of their sins, the salvation of their souls, the reconciliation of all the people, and the tranquillity and peace of all creatures, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever, amen."

He signs the body with a broken piece, saying, "The holy body is signed with the absolving blood in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever, amen.

And when he places the broken pieces in the type of the cross, he says, "These divine Mysteries are signed, sanctified, united, and fulfilled, in the name of the glorious Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever, amen."

Here he makes the sign of the cross, not over the mysteries, but upon his forehead.

These things suffice concerning the signing of the Mysteries, for you also only asked us, in the matter of the canon of the Mysteries, concerning the signing of the Mysteries.

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[1] For ܕܡܬܩܒܪ ܛܘܦܣܐܝܬ ܘܡܬܚܝܐ ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ: ܘܡܬܢܚܡ ܐܪܙܢܝܬ.

Second canon: Concerning the priest who celebrates: when ought he to receive the sacrament, and when is he designated to consecrate?

The priest, then, who is set apart for the fearful ministry of offering up the divine oblation receives the sacrament before the bishop and before the entire assembly of priests, according to ecclesiastical custom, because of two things: as it is written, "It is proper for the husbandman who labors to be fed first from his fruits;"[1] and another, it is not the case that, since he ministers the mediation of the sacrament, he (himself) has no need of it, but to such an extent does he need the gift and pardon of the Mysteries that before all the baptized and before all who celebrate he makes haste, longing to receive, like a needy person longing to be pardoned. But the bishop gives (it) to him, if he is present; and if he is not present, the head of the benches, the eldest of the presbyters gives (it) to him. Then he who consecrated responds, giving to the one who gave to him. These things are done also concerning {170} the Lord's cup. Then he who consecrated gives the sacrament to the priests and deacons who are in the chancel and then blesses the people above the steps of the qeṣtroma[2] after they bring down the Mysteries, and says the saying of the apostle, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all for ever, amen."

Then the (other) priests distribute the sacrament, and he[3] returns to venerate and salute the altar, and stands on the right hand, facing south, if he does not also go down to distribute. And if it is necessary because of a lack of priests, the bishop also goes down to distribute, while a deacon or priest bears before him the paten of the sacrament. However, if he (the bishop) does not distribute, he enters and sits in the sacristy, that the people may visit him and take the "peace" from him. But he who is commanded to consecrate is not designated for this beforehand, but at the same moment the bishop and priests take the "peace" from the altar and from one another the archdeacon makes known the one who is to consecrate. But if the head of the ministry[4] is not present, the assistant of the archdeacon[5] or the one who administers the bema by the command of the bishop will appoint the one who consecrates.

Third canon: that a deacon is not allowed to give the sacrament to a priest; and when there is no priest or deacon to give the sacrament, how it is ordained to take the sacrament from the altar.

In the divine and synodical canons, then, it is commanded that a deacon is not allowed to give the sacrament to a priest, and the reason is there clearly shown why it is not allowed. However, if there is no other priest to give to the priest who desires to receive, a deacon being present, the matter shall be provided for according to the approved custom which obtains among the learned: the priest takes a portion from the altar and places it upon the hands of the deacon nearby and falls down and venerates the cominical body. Then the presbyter takes (it) with the fingers of his right hand from the hands of the deacon, then takes it with the fingers of his left hand and places it in his right hand, and the deacon says, "The body of Christ." When he has received, he turns and falls upon his face, then takes the cup from the altar and gives it into the hands of the deacon. Then he venerates and takes the cup from the hands of the deacon, receives from it, and turns and gives the cup to the deacon (who) replaces it upon the altar. But if there is no deacon present, the priest takes the sacrament from the altar in the same order in which he takes from the hand of the deacon out of necessity. This is if there is a "treasury"[6] of the sacrament. But if there is none, the priest is not permitted by himself to consecrate without a deacon or without another priest, for without one who is in charge of the maršata[1] and is the litanizer of the Church, who stirs up the people with his words and calls them to prayer, how can he be able to consecrate?

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[1] 2 Tim. 2:6.

[2] I.e., the raised floor or base of the Altar. The chancel steps are here indicated.

[3] I.e., the consecrating priest.

[4] I.e., the archdeacon, who is, as it were, a "master of ceremonies".

[5] For ܐܬܪ ܪܒ ܡܫܡܫ, or, "antiarchdeacon."

[6] This appears to be a reference to a reserved sacrament, since the consecration could not have taken place without a deacon present.

{171} Fourth canon: Concerning how and in what way those ought to be blessed who come to receive ordination into the ecclesiastical ranks.

Remember, O my lord, that you did not ask us to write you concerning all the canons of ordination which have been ordained, but this alone: whether the Gospel ought to be placed upon the altar at a certain moment of ordination.

Concerning this I inform you that the fulfillment of divine things should be in the presence of the Gospel, not only at the moment of ordination, but also at the hour of the offering up of the divine oblation, and at the hour of the consecration of the oil of baptism. When the bishop or priest draws near to hallow the font of absolving baptism, the archdeacon takes the great book and a presbyter the horn of oil, and they should stand with the bishop or priest who consecrates around the font. But at the hour of ordination, when the Gospel is placed upon the altar, the bishop should speak with those who are being ordained concerning the height and glory of the ministry which they are set apart to fulfill, and concerning the chaste and noble life in which they are commanded to be the ministers of divine things around the altar of absolution. Immediately they wash their hands as a sign of an innocent mind which is freed from all evil for the pure service, which is completed with the orders of the hosts on high with all care. The canons which are appointed according to the law which obtains are fulfilled in regard to them, as concerning which it is also elsewhere set down by us.

Fifth canon: that some of the baptized, and some of the priests, the teachers of the baptized, angrily withhold the "peace" from one another, not only outside the courts of the Church, but also within the divine temple and within the place of reconciliation and absolution.

Christ our Life-giver by his death put to death our death, and by his cross slew murderous enmity. He came and proclaimed peace to those far off and those nearby. Those whose minds are tempered with these trustworthy thoughts, in accord with what follows from our faith, their own constancy will not allow to depart beyond the divine precincts within the boundaries of the household to which they were called. But there are some of the baptized who are sick by reason of wrath and weakened by the insult of their fellow disciples, for not even at the hour of reconciliation, when {172} they are within the divine temples, do they submit to being reconciled and healed of the sickness of hatred which tortures them. Not even absolving priests within the absolving chancel tremble and recall their absolving ministry, but deal falsely, either from wickedness, like the insolent, or from deficiency, like the ignorant, and generate scandal and sins. They bring blame upon the teaching which is blameless, for at the hour when the litanizer of the Church cries out "Give the peace to one another", either they are scornful and depart like strangers (who are) not communicants, or they impudently remain and tread down the dominical law of peace rancorously[2], in the manner of Iscariot.

Therefore, one who is so utterly hard and bestial may not remain beneath the overshadowing of the sanctuary, nor venture to receive the Lordly body of reconciliation within provoking palms[3] which drip with enmity, but should be thoroughly alienated and utterly cast out and should not minister, so that he may not corrupt many like a gangrenous ulcer, until he comes to his senses and obeys the teachers and the Lord of the community. For we are permitted by our Lord, as fulfillers of his commandment, to speak with much freedom before him at the fearful moment of the offering up of the oblation by virtue of two things: that is, we are doing as we are commanded by forgiveness toward our debtors, and because we ask that forgiveness of our own offenses be granted us by him, for he will "forgive us our debts and sins as we also have forgiven our debtors."[1] The commandment is marvelous which stimulates us to the service of excellence. The promise is also marvelous which summons us to the pardon of our debts and extends to us healing from the stains of sin. For who does not long for these things? And who among the rational does not hasten to the forgiveness of his colleagues[2]? For thus he receives forgiveness of his own debts from his Lord, inasmuch as those who are deemed worthy to become children of God by grace speak thus: "We, O our Lord, the Lord of all, the Absolver of sins, have forgiven our debtors as you have commanded us. But you, O Lord, Lover of the penitent, forgive us our sins as you promised." Why, then, O wrathful one, have you recited this phrase with all the community, though you have not forgiven your debtors? Have you employed falsehood and mockery? Or have you kept silence and passed over the phrase, destroying the entire order of the structured sequence, which is helpful to those who employ it thoughtfully and not perfunctorily, lovingly and not superficially? For if the angry man speaks the dominical word of forgiveness while not forgiving, it is obvious presumption. If he skips over it his presumption is doubled — in the first case deceitfully, and in both casescontemptuously.

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[1] ? for ܡܪ̈ܫܬܐ. Chabot suggests "offerings". The meaning of the word is unknown.

[2] Chabot has substituted ܩܢܐܬܢܐܝܬ for ܩܢܘܢܐܝܬ, "canonically," which cannot possibly be right.

[3] ܚܘ̈ܦܢܐ for ܚܘܦܢ̈ܐ.

For at the moment of the offering of the oblation we believe {173} that the entire chancel surrounding the Altar is full of ministers of fire and of spirit for the honor of the body and blood of Lordship, who with their hallowings mystically overshadow and celebrate it, bending their necks downward from fear and love. Indeed, the priest who has been deemed worthy to become a fellow-laborer with those who lack anger, and with them in their hallowings says, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, for heaven and earth are full of his praises,"[3] if he (himself) is angry and indignant, what can he do in the place of reconciliation which is full of the propitiatory and absolving hosts? Or how can he claim to be a disciple and servant of the good Lord, who calls us to reconciliation with one another, when he holds court with us at the coming judgment? "When you are offering your oblation upon the altar, and there you remember that your brother retains some anger against you,"[4] do not venture to make an offering. For love, which is lovelier than all and well-pleasing to all, does not breathe from your offering, but enmity which provokes and stirs up Gehenna. What should he who offers do? "Leave your oblation there upon the altar, and go first to be reconciled with your brother."[5] Again, he adds enticingly and menacingly, "Quickly agree with your adversary at law while you are with him on the way,"[6] while there is opportunity that, by the remedy of sinners' repentance, and by the free medicines of the mercifulness of the heavenly Physician, those afflicted by the sores of their sins might be healed while death has not yet overtaken them and they have become heirs of Gehenna for ever.

Therefore, let not the angry man, the bitter of soul, the palate of whose mind is not sweetened by the teaching of life, venture to take the sacrament, for he gains utterly no profit from it, because it is said in one of the holy readings by one of the eloquent in the Spirit, "Whoever eats of the body of the Lord and drinks from his cup and is not worthy, eats and drinks condemnation for himself."[1] O how contrary the apostolic word, according to its outward utterance, to the dominical promise of our Life-giver who said, "This is my body which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins."[2] And in another place, while exalting the type and joining it to the Archetype, he says, "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven."[3] For he who is deemed worthy to receive the gift of the Life-giving Mysteries believes that our Lord is near. Why, then, O apostle, do you, conversant in the Mysteries of Christ, call his absolving body the "condemnation" of its receiver? "He does not discern the body of the Lord,"[4] that is, he receives it contemptuously, not lovingly and fearfully, and he approaches the table of life as though an ordinary table, and treats as ordinary food the food of grace which is above the ordinary. Like the contemptuous mind of one who draws near to condemnation and not to pardon, he accepts the life-giving Mystery {174} of the propitiatory sacrifice, and it is about him the aged Simeon, constrained by the Spirit, also said "This one is appointed for the rise and fall of many,"[5] corresponding to the mind of believers and unbelievers, for these rise because they believe, and the others fall because they do not believe.

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[1] Cf. Mt. 6:12.

[2] ܟ̈ܢܘܬܐ for ܟ̈ܢܝܬܐ.

[3] Isa. 6:3.

[4] Mt. 5:23.

[5] Mt. 5:24.

[6] Mt. 5:25.

These things, therefore, we have told you at length because we are greatly distressed concerning those who provoke resentment and those who retain resentment, and being established as teachers and preachers of the baptized, they turn round and scandalize many and condemn themselves.

Sixth canon: concerning one who sins secretly and repents secretly, and fears to reveal it lest it be made known abroad and he may be overpowered by the affliction and reproach of the vicious and scornful: may there not be, in some way, his correction, (that) he may receive healing, and be found, and not perish?

The Holy Spirit establishes priests within the confines of his sheepfold as physicians of souls through the medicines of spiritual teaching and through the assistance of prayers which are sincerely offered on behalf of the penitent before the Friend of the penitent, and priests who minister absolution, that they may heal the afflicted, so that they might be re-united with the ecclesiastical body, having been cast out and alienated from its health the entire time that they suffered in the bed of the pains of sin. Concerning this, a benevolent mind, which is utterly unsullied by harshness, and continuous prayer, in which negligence does not at all hold sway, is useful for the priests, who are appointed in the ministry of absolution as faithful and skillful arch-physicians, who heal many diseases, while not publicizing (them), aware that the suffering might by this be set at ease, and by this be comforted. In this — and more especially in this — it is right for the spiritual physicians, the priests of the Church, to suffer with the infirm as infirm, and to turn them carefully from the sicknesses of sins which are hidden and grievous. They should not expose them abroad, but restore them with the divine craft and spiritual medicines which are committed into their hands. But if the sinner is fearful of making known his spots because just and careful priests cannot be found anywhere, let the sinner trouble himself (to go) to a place where there are careful and merciful priests.

We say this as a warning to priests: they should not at all pervert themselves and retain within themselves this reproach of great condemnation. They should not be wrathful instead of propitiatory, or scandalizing instead of absolving, or harsh instead of merciful, or open-mouthed instead of closed-tongued. However, we know that the assembly of Christ is not deprived of priests who are observant, careful, faithful, and lovers of the healing of the stricken; for even if there are among them those who are perverse and wrathful and not upright, yet many are found {175} in the rank of priests who have been pleasing and have acted becomingly before many, and have been acceptable to the Lord of creation in all generations in all regions. Therefore, this canon ought to be observed for the reason which has been stated.

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[1] 1 Cor. 11:27.

[2] Cf. 1 Cor. 11:24.

[3] Cf. Jn. 6:51.

[4] 1Cor. 11:29.

[5] Lk. 2:34.

Although it is written, "Many were baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, confessing their sins,"[1] (yet) the blessed David hid the double nature of his sins, not because of negligence, and not because of impenitence, but because of the scandal to many and because of the shame of many. His Lord exposed him through the parable which he propounded for him through the prophet, for since he had brought condemnation upon himself ardently and vigorously, so he ought to sorrow all the more for his offense, as indeed he did sorrow. Immediately he lamented and turned back, and became totally an abode for propitiatory repentance. The grace which was his returned to him, which had left him at the time he was provoking anger, for there is no favoritism before the Judge of the worlds. He was absolved that he might not perish, and after his genuine pardon he was brought low that he might be wary, that through him many might be strengthened and take heed.

However, we are also aware of others who, between themselves and God, in a laborious and patient way, have healed their own wounds because they did not trust anyone, like the blessed bishop who was forced to apostatize and sacrifice to idols. When he was delivered, he spit in the face of the world and fled from it completely. He remained in a certain place and did not see anyone, and did not appear to anyone for thirty-seven years. Then an apparition told him, "Your repentance has been accepted at this hour, for you have been penitent until now, in that you have done penance in a laborious, sincere, and propitiatory way. From now on, for the rest of the life which remains to you, you must cultivate righteousness."

The beginning of repentance is the forsaking of hateful things. Priests, who are preachers and teachers of the community, should beware of their tongues, and should establish gates and bolts upon their lips, and should not despise and scatter abroad the secrets of the words of the faithful, for it was said by the prophet, in the name of the Lord of prophets and priests, "The lips of the priest should guard knowledge, and from his mouth they ask for the law,"[2] as a teacher and fulfiller of righteousness, for he is the messenger of the mighty Lord, as mediator between God and men, in the likeness of Moses the prophet — in the likeness of our Lord, the Lord of Moses — who receives from God and teaches all the faithful who believe. Therefore the priests of God must not also forget what was said by the wise one — the wisest of the wise — "Adjudicate your contention with your fellow, and do not reveal another's secret," and "A backbiter reveals a secret,"[3] and "He who reveals a secret destroys his trustworthiness,"[4] and "He who reveals a secret is a child of reproach." And to put to shame even more he says, "If you hear something, let it die in your heart. It is not an arrow that it should pierce you and (then) go out" — and a myriad such as these are said for our warning and for the profit of our lives.

{176} Seventh canon: that a priest is not allowed to have resentment toward anyone, so that he withholds from him the gift of the Holy Mysteries.

A priest, then, who is made the mediator, caretaker, and steward of the divine Mysteries, is not allowed, at the hour when he distributes the Mysteries to the faithful, to withhold the sacrament from someone against whom he has resentment, but he should give the sacrament to the one against whom the priest holds resentment — or he against the priest — in a similar manner as to those against whom he holds no resentment, nor they against him, and he should not differentiate. Then afterwards, either in private, between the two of them, or between them and those upon whom both of them agree — that they may have mediators, reprovers, and correctors — or before the church and the head of the church, only lovingly, and as brothers whose brotherhood is double, by nature and by the Lord of nature, (that is,) by a fashioning Adamically within the fleshly womb, and by conversion in the Christian way within the womb of spiritual baptism, let them seek to deny themselves and (thus) not be rejected[1], for in this way the Christian law is fulfilled by Christians, which is love, the first of the laws, for when the wrong-doer is reproved by others, he who has been wronged by him is readily delivered.

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[1] Cf. Mt. 3:6; Mk. 1:5.
[2] Mal. 2:7.
[3] Prov. 11:13
[4] Sir. 27:16?

Eighth canon: whether a priest is permitted to curse himself through writings and seals without (some) compulsion stronger than his will.

We think, then, that along with us and like us, the children of the discipleship of life are aware that the life-style of faithful laymen is very exalted, just as the appearance, mind, and life-style of the priests are, as much as it is possible, an image and illustration, representatively and regularly, of the spiritual life-style to which right confessors are summoned, and which priests and the religious, the teachers of the Church, preach and teach. Because of this, priests are not permitted, by ornamented garb and splendorous manners, and with minds that vacillate, sway, and change childishly with every wind, to conduct themselves in a worldly way like the worldly laymen, but as much as it is possible, they should imitate the conversation and life to come, so that in this way they may protect the members of the household and strengthen their constancy, and outsiders may marvel and be persuaded of the truth. Therefore, in accord with the life-style, rank, and teaching of the priest, none of the faithful laymen may compel any of the priests to place a curse upon himself in writing and with seals, for his tongue is trustworthy when he says anything, and his word is as {177} the admonition of our Lord, "Yes, yes, and no, no."[2] He is, in his prayer and in his ministry, a propitiator of God and an absolver of those who believe. But should the pressure of necessities — not of believers and rulers — forces him, beyond his custom and beyond his will, to sign, seal, and curse himself, we are persuaded that it is impossible for him to depart from his custom and good and acceptable will, but we do not make him bear the canon as a debtor. For it is not a matter of saving faith, nor in accordance with[3] the ways in which truth is made resplendent, those (for which) we readily accept every peril, and, if necessary, readily give ourselves to death without wavering, so that utterly nothing foreign and contrary to the truth may touch us, but, our hearts being composed and cleansed of an evil conscience, we cling to the confession of our hope unswervingly, and to the evangelical ways unshakably. But if there is a priest who, as a lover of impure possessions, customarily, of his own will, brings himself to this, (in such a case) we will ban him, and he may not minister, as one who departs from the propitiatory law of his priesthood, until he turns and becomes a propitiator of righteousness and a spurner of excesses.[4]

Ninth canon: concerning whether an anathema is valid, in that it is determined by the word of a priest alone, not joined with the "Word of God", or whether it is invalid.

This virtuous custom obtains in many places, then, among honest believers, that not only when a priest says to a believer, "You are not allowed to do such and such or to say such and such," but also when he says, "You should not do such and such, and you should not say such and such," the believer thinks that it is said to him by the priest with the object and intention of a ban, and he circumspectly keeps the word of the priest as a disciple of the priest, and does not transgress against it until he is permitted. If (it is) because "you are not allowed" (that) he forbids it, there is no longer ambiguity, knowing that it bears a penalty, and this is also clear, unambiguously, to the faithful, in that it is with the "Word of God" that the priest joins and equips a priestly anathema for the shame and terror of the contentious[1] and quarrelsome that, perchance, they might yield and tremble, and fraud and deceit may not be served in judgment and in the resolution of strife between a man and his brother. For thus our Lord gave authority to priests: "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."[2] But he[3] is also empowered concerning the forgiveness of sins: "If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven him, and if you retain them for anyone, they are retained."[4] Care is also required of priests that {178} they do not scatter about the fearful anathema of the priesthood without necessity, however it may be, for whatever it may be, and make the fruit fruitless, and treat with contempt the priesthood, which is venerable and honorable to those above and those below, and governs and rules in heaven and on earth.

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[1] ? ܢܬܒܥܘܢ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܢܛܠܡܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܢܬܛܠܡܘܢ.

[2] Mt. 5:37.

[3] ܒܠ for ܒܠܠ.

[4] Caveat lector: this entire canon is obscure to me, not only because of its subject matter, but because of its construction.

Tenth canon: concerning whether is right or not for believers and priests to take oaths.

Now those of old resolved their disputes with oaths which they concealed from sight and from human knowledge. But Christ our Life-giver, while he was exalting the evangelical ways of Christianity above the legal ways of milk-sucking Judaism, and was demonstrating that the heavenly way was (now) revealed and mystically imparted, commanded through his own legislation that disciples of his Gospel should in no way take an oath, but as "mature (men)" they should confirm their words and resolve their disputes with "yes" and "no" as those who reject superfluities which are unsuitable for those who possess them[5], from which they derive painful sin and not necessary use, as also, by his prayer, he taught the assemblies of those who had been made, and were being made, disciples of his teaching: "Give us our necessary bread today."[6] Here he rejected superfluous things which lead to sin and are not useful, and gave permission for the use of necessary things, which one cannot do without, that which is from God, which is blameless and innocent when it is sought with prayer. Later on imprudent men among the children of the Church have employed — and are employing — oaths, not with the permission of the Church's leaders, but by their own willful choice, for the profit of their purses, although permission was not given to them to take oaths, nor have they been in any way given permission by the leaders of the Church. They are not those who scorn the dominical legislation, God forbid!, but doubtless they were constrained at the beginning by pagans and unbelievers, and this has been strengthened among them as something which, perhaps, restrains them from fraud and frees them from dishonesty, sin, and vexation, since they have been unable to conduct themselves according to perfection and the dominical laws. But the steadfast and circumspect never take oaths. A believer who takes oaths, if it is customary for him, should be proscribed by (reason of) it, and should be alienated from the order of his fellow-believers for a specified period, even if he swears truly, because the profit of his purse was accounted more precious to him than the good name appropriate to believers. Priests may never take oaths. Should one of them uncustomarily and not willfully swear, he may not minister for a specified time, even if he swore justly, until he has covered his offense and enshrouded it with his penitence. Even if he had permission of his bishop due to {179} the compulsion of pagans, in the same way too he must not minister for a specified period. But if he swore falsely he may not serve at all, as one who willfully and with his own knowledge became his own condemner and the scandalizer of many. All matters are left to the good, just, and blameless administration which is due to them from the bishop, who is the head of the administration of ecclesiastical matters in the whole diocese committed to him.

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[1] ܚܪ̈ܝܢܐ for ܚܪ̈ܢܐ.

[2] Mt. 18:18.

[3] I.e., a priest.

[4] Jn. 20:23.

[5] ܐ ܠܩܢ̈ܝܗܘܢ for ܩܢܢ̈ܝܗܘܢ.

[6] Mt. 6:11; Lk. 11:3.

Eleventh canon: concerning the priest who alone is aware of the offenses of his fellow-priests, what ought he to do about this?

If the offense of a wrong-doing priest is not willful but a slip, and no one else is aware of his sin, the priest who knows should inform the bishop, and the bishop should make an examination in the presence of both of them. If he who offended confesses like a penitent that he offended, let him assign to him a time of penance according to his offense, and let him not minister until he is healed. But if he has been damaged by adultery or fornication when he has a wife, it is commanded concerning him by the early canons and fathers that he be utterly cast out of the ministry of the priesthood. But the fathers who afterwards administered the sees of the founders, compassionately, as merciful men, and not negligently, like teachers of laxness, expelled him to penance such as was specified by the synod. But if his offense was open and notorious, he should be admonished in an ecclesiastical council according to the command of the godly apostle, "Admonish those who sin before everyone, that the rest of men might also fear."[1] Such as these should be alienated from the service of the Mysteries, according to the dominical admonitions, "Do not give the holy thing to dogs, and do not cast pearls before swine"[2] — that is, he calls "dogs" and "swine" those who are disgraceful[3] in their deeds, transgressors of the divine laws, and presumptuous toward the paternal canons. He calls the Holy Mysteries "the holy thing" and "pearls", in the likeness of those things which are precious and glorious among men. Much labor is required of the bishop and priests in two things: that is, that sin should not branch out among the disciples through a lack of diligence and correction, and (that) they do not despise sinners, for it is said concerning the expelled sinner, "You should not hold him as an enemy, but you should admonish him as a brother,"[4] as also the parable of our Lord concerning the virgins[5] blamed the harsh who "lack oil," and spared and accepted the compassionate who are full of love, who are compared with softening oil which kills spreading ulcers as absolution (kills) sin. Therefore, whether {180} a dispute is examined between an accused and an accuser before the head of administration, or whether before the whole church, as it is written, neither should the guilty be hidden nor the innocent silenced, but all things should be administered wisely, with zeal mixed with mercies, as was said concerning the two in the divine volumes, "You shall not conceal the unjust beneath the edge of your cloak,"[6] and the other, "The judgment will be merciless upon one who does not work mercies."[7] That is to say, our Lord, the good and just God, knows the hidden things and hates hateful things, but loves the penitent. (It is) he, the sum of the riches of whose compassion never fails toward the fashioning of the race of Adam, who commands differently concerning two things: that is, that sin should [not] grow strong and increase, and that righteousness should not grow weak and be cut off.

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[1] 1 Tim. 5:20.
[2] Mt. 7:6.
[3] ܥܒܝܪ̈ܐ for ܒܥܝܪ̈ܐ..

[4] 2 Thes. 3:15.
[5] Mt. 25:1-13.
[6] Mal. 2:16.
[7] Jas. 2:13.

Twelfth canon: whether one is allowed to charge interest and demand usury or not, and how much and in what manner may it be charged if it is proper to take (it).

The divine scriptures, then, strongly command the members of the household not to involve interest and discounting in their strivings after assets, for it is this business which sustains the love of money, the root of all evil things, and so often ensnares, and, so to speak, produces usury; and the lending of money on interest leads on to greed, which is idolatry. [Some] of the faithful protect themselves wisely and never charge interest or usury, because they have cherished a good name, for which a good reward is kept, more than sinful mammon, for which endless punishment is reserved. But others of the household willfully, though it is not allowed to them, charge interest according to a definition which they, on their own, have made and circulated, saying, "We charge the 'one percent per month of the Church'," and they determine prepayment greedily and not as one who is baptized. This, which is blameworthy and abominable, should not have a place among the baptized, as it is foreign to the propitiating life-style. That which they charge according to the "one percent per month of the Church" the leaders of the Church have overlooked, that it may be for the supply of the needy, for many of the needy — which is not to say all of them — are continually asking, petitioning, and supplicating the money-lords to lend to them on interest, that they may not be vexed and so often grieve. It is well for believers to cultivate what is perfect, which we have clearly made known according to the sense of holy Scriptures, even if we have briefly written about it. But if anyone considers and does other things — even if he averts the eyes of his understanding from that which is perfect — let him fear, that he may not greatly presume to hold, as in a dream, something which does not last. But also if he charges interest, the offspring of the barren, which is forced to bring forth unnaturally, in the name of what is called the "one percent per month of the Church", instead of having regard for the purse, which is {181} transitory and puts to shame, let him regard the poor and his own reputation, and not add to the interest. However, he should utterly never touch usury, because his condemnation will be harsh.

Thirteenth canon: concerning those who anathematize themselves or swear oaths, whether willfully or by coercion, the bishop has authority to investigate and to exercise administration in justice, without offense, and to grant them re-instatement.

The mind is the source of thoughts, and the tongue is the steward and carrier of thoughts. If their governor is sound — that is, the mind, the governor of hidden thoughts and open words — what belongs to it stands firm and unshaken and its thoughts are brought forward in an orderly fashion, and the tongue is moved in an orderly fashion as well.

Therefore, he who is overtaken in oaths and in an anathema against himself, if it be through the compulsion of others and not by his own will, and he is ensnared in this uncharacteristically, let him be absolved and shortly re-instated, whoever he may be. However, if it is his custom, as an irritable man, (or) of his own will, as a scornful and arrogant man, a different settlement should be required, and if necessary let him also swear that he will never again transgress ignorantly, and then let him be re-instated and absolved by his bishop.

Fourteenth canon: After the departure of one of the faithful, how should his property be administered if he did not make testaments?

Testaments — that is for those who have departed in our Lord — ought to be established, and no alteration is permitted in them, unless, perhaps, those departed have concealed a debt which they are truly known to owe, and they have not given directions concerning it, or they did so wrongfully when they remembered (it), or inattentively because the matter slipped from their mind at the moment the angel of death disturbed them to walk in the way of all the earth. In this one (case) the debt ought to be repaid to its owners with care and calmly, for they ought not to be defrauded. As for what remains, neither kings and rulers of the earth, nor God, the Lord of the angels, have been of a mind to dismiss or disturb the testaments of the departed, for the deeds and instructions of everyone depart with him, and yonder, before the judge of the ages, appear, so that, in proportion to them, they may be rightly recompensed. However, if one has children and a wife, but did not make testaments, his property remains with his wife. If he has no wife but has children, it remains with his children. Even though, in a few lands, the wife takes her dowry and marriage portion and leaves, {182} many lands do not permit this at all. If one departs without a wife, without children, and without testaments, his property is divided into three portions, that is, for the brothers and family of his wife, for the brothers and family of the man, and the third portion for the house of God, with the knowledge of the bishop, and with the knowledge of the notable and honest of the clergy and faithful. If he departs having a wife and makes a will, and defrauds the wife of the property which she brought from the house of her parents, and of the property which they gained through toil in partnership with one another, in this one thing his instruction shall become null and shall not stand, because he has committed fraud like one who, while owing, defrauds his creditor, and the leaders of the Church and her judges do not allow injustice such as this to be carried out.

Fifteenth canon: concerning those who do not place their gifts or fulfill their vows and offerings for the wiping away of their sins in the churches and monasteries of their own [lands] according to the common law, but in temples outside (their lands).

First of all, then, believers are obliged to visit with appropriate diligence the holy habitations, churches, and monasteries of villages in the land of their habitation, and there fulfill their vows and offerings and offer their gifts for the effacing of their sins, so that (it might) not (happen) that, while the custom continues of moving round from place to place, many habitations become desolate, sin is served, insiders are scandalized, outsiders mock and scoff at us, and the instruction of many is hindered. Through leaders, therefore, who well know from the holy readings what is advantageous and disadvantageous to the community, faithful men and women should learn those things which edify them and abstain from those things which make them blameworthy. The flock of Christ should not be like sheep without a shepherd, wandering without a leader upon mountains which are deprived of pastures and food and are full of ravenous beasts. The faithful should not live as though knowledgeable, though (they are) ignorant because they have not learned. They should not be acephalous, like a crab without a head, or autocephalous — (as) one[1] governing himself vainly, or one refusing medicine, rejoicing in his own killing — for he draws upon himself shame and lasting reproach. Instead, let them be persuaded of the admonition of the approved among the apostles, the apostle of the nations, Paul: "Obey your leaders, and listen to them, for they keep watch for your souls as men who give your account, that they may do this with joy and not with sighs."[2] Not {183} with lamenting, but . . . . . . for the leaders should stand before God at every hour, while supplicating for the children and disciples of their teaching, so that all these things may be for edification and not for destruction, according to the will of the good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

Now why or for what advantage do the faithful go about in places which are not their own? If, on the one hand, (it is) for pleasure, this is the occupation of children, and the satisfaction of the belly, and not for the profit of the soul. But if for the advantage of the soul they abandon the holy temples of their own land, and go to pray in holy habitations outside their own land because they think that God hears more there and is more responsive to them, and fulfills their request and accepts their offerings, their hope is deceived in them. Let them hear from us, then, and come to our perfect teaching, the same which we received from our Lord and Life-giver when he spoke to the Samaritan woman, and brought to an end the erroneous teaching of the Samaritans, and the ancient infantile teaching of the Jews, and introduced the advantage of his own maturity: "The hour is coming, and even now is, when not on this Mount Gerizim," as you Samaritans have mistaken, "nor in Jerusalem," as the Jews childishly hold, for they think that there alone God works, and leads, and answers, and responds — from now on not only in these places will those worship God who become my disciples, for I am teaching them the developed doctrine, for "God is spirit, and those who worship him ought to worship in spirit and in truth."[1] For the Father also desires worshipers such as these, who in all offer him mature worship according to the completeness and infinitude of his nature, that which now obtains also among true, upright, and steadfast Christians. Before the coming of our Lord, since in every place idols and graven things were served, and gods[2] and goddesses were worshipped, and the error which is the chief of errors flourished in creation, men inquired, "Who is[3] the true God, and where is the land of (his) service," and there they hastened to worship and offer their vows, and to make their requests. Like the Jews scattered in various places because of the captivity of Palestine . . . . . . they hastened to go up once a year, and like the Queen of Sheba who came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon and to worship the God of all; and like Naaman the Aramean, after he received healing through the hands of the heavenly healer, the prophet of the spirit, and was cleansed of his leprosy, and was purified of his paganism, and went up from time to time to Jerusalem to render worship and thanksgiving to the Lord of the prophet, who through the hands of the godly prophet {184} raised up his body from the mortality of unclean leprosy; and like the official of Candace, the queen of the Cushites, who came to Jerusalem according to the ancient custom to render worship to the God of the Hebrews, that is, the God of truth, the Fashioner and Orderer of all. He who went up from his own land was not a pagan choked with error, but a Jew sucking milk childishly, and he returned and went down to his land, not a Jew holding the shadows of the law, the instructor and pedagogue of young children, but a Christian of fully-matured ways, for through the preacher of perfect things, Philip the messenger, he found the Lord of perfection, who is the end of the law and the expectation of the nations.

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[1] The subject abruptly turns singular.

[2] Heb. 13:17.

There were many such as these who have journeyed in the pathways of the household to the folds of the household, and with a mind of weak faith have made inquiry, and scorned and rejected the vain pieties of the children of error, but weakly, because they thought that "here" God visits and "there" he responds. But now that the light of our Lord has shone forth in the hearts of those who confess aright, and many portions of the world are bound beneath the yoke of the faith of the Lord's cross, and many without number are radiant with the diffuse splendors of the awaited perfection, why do the children of the Mysteries of perfection grope in the darkness of instability, and feel about the walls at midday like the sightless blind or like the deaf without hearing. Christians should not be like the ungrateful and quarrelsome Jews, who set themselves against the divine teaching which was spoken through godly prophets and just priests until they were uprooted and cast out of Palestine, scattered in all lands, deprived of their benefit, and alienated from the singular care which had led and visited them for long years, and had born them for the many reasons which are not hidden from the wise in the holy readings, but especially because of the incomparable benefit which was hidden in the descent of the house of Abraham.

If there are faithful who, after they visit the churches and monasteries in their own land, desire also to visit habitations outside their own lands, not as though they may better find God there, but as those who desire to give a small portion of their resources to the owner of the habitation and the owner of the property, these we do not forbid, for they are not blameworthy. But if they go and move around and flutter about according to another intention than that put down by us above, like those for whom their God is lost and they do not know where to find him or where he answers them, these delude themselves and depart from the perfect teaching of the truth. If the sick have need of health, the teachers and leaders who are placed over their keeping should not neglect their correction, but it is necessarily urgent for them to return them to the teaching of the doctrine of maturity. {185} Now there are many faithful in various places who also do not wish to offer their gifts in the church in which they were baptized, in which they pray, and in which they receive the absolving gift of the Holy Mysteries, and because they are parsimonious about a small thing, they gain contempt from the discerning, and they teach[1] accursed customs which are foreign to the good customs of the Church, those which have been handed down without change from the apostles and fathers, who adorned the Church with propitiatory laws and helpful customs, instructing the baptized to support from their resources the divine habitations and those who minister to God in them on behalf of the whole community.

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[1] Cf. Jn. 4:21-24.

[2] For ܐܠܗܘ̈ܢܐ, petty deities?

[3] ܐܝܢܘ for ܐܝܢܢܘ.

Perhaps the simple do not recognize that, for their own profit, that is, for the effacing of their sins, and for the increase and blessing of their resources, they are commanded to give something to the Church, for the godly Paul necessarily makes mention of these things from the Old (Testament) and from the New: "Do you not know that those who serve in the sanctuary are sustained from the sanctuary, and those who labor with the altar share with the altar? In the same way also our Lord commanded that those who proclaim his gospel should live by his gospel."[2] For whatever is provided willingly, from a good custom, its reward is preserved and specified. But if righteousness is not willingly served, it is without profit to its doer. Therefore, the disciples and teachers should take care that they do not allow alien customs to be propagated within the ecclesiastical assemblies.

Sixteenth canon: whether a cleric is allowed to honor his fellow within the Church during the liturgy, exalting him above himself.

When a cleric who wishes to honor his colleague raises up higher than himself one who is set below him, he should not be hindered from this his desire, for it is good, if he does it with an upright intention. However, this should be with the knowledge and by the command of the chief administrator in the presence of some of the clergy, so that it might not accustom many to desire to seek honor though unworthy, and thereafter strife should blaze forth which is difficult to put out, while both of them understand — that is he who honors and he who is honored — that it is not easy for one to alter something they have once done[3] willingly (and) without compulsion. Indeed, many, because they are stalwart in virtue and discipline, have been deemed worthy of the honor which is due them by the leaders of the Church, as those who by these things have opened doors for many to the service of excellence and to instruction in doctrine. By this means the ecclesiastical assemblies have been greatly enlightened, and they have provided the opportunity for God to be found by many, and the instruction of strangers and the reinforcement of members of the household to increase. But discipleship more or less stands still when {186} two things are practiced to block (the way)[4]: in that the cultivators of virtue and training are few, and when there are many who, through big talk and the luster of elegant clothing, (only) promise excellence, rare and few are those in whom their promise is fulfilled with an upright intention and with a sober mind which is not superficial, and through honest employment which is not empty. However, the bishop should administer with an upright intention for the sake of what is needed, as for edification, not prejudicially out of love for someone though he is unworthy, and not harshly, out of hatred as for the destruction of men, but with the mind of the Psalmist of the Spirit, as with inducement he teaches, "He honors those that fear the Lord."[1]

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[1] ܡܠܦܝܢ.

[2] 1 Cor. 9:13-14.

[3] Reading ܥܒܕܘ for ܐܒܕܘ.

[4] Reading ܕܠܡܣܘܟ for ܕܠܡܟܘܣ.

Seventeenth canon: that the Oil of Anointing which is set apart for absolving Baptism is not allowed to be given for the use of other things, but only for Baptism.

The holy Oil of Anointing, which, according to tradition, is kept in the Church in all regions, is powerfully and typically a Mystery of the putting on of the "adoption of sons" and of incorruptibility, and the promise of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which those who are deemed worthy of holy Baptism receive in a hidden way, and by which they are begotten divinely to immortality. Because of this, it is commanded and decreed that it may never be given for the use of other things, but only for divine Baptism, for which it is reserved and kept. Therefore, he who gives it and he who takes it, except for Baptism, shall both be anathematized until they are healed by repentance, and by agreement they are absolved. For as no one is allowed to employ the patens and holy chalices and utensils of the holy service for the use of other things, so also it has been decreed and held for the Oil of Anointing from of old, and it shall obtain for ever as it has been held.

Eighteenth canon: concerning the division of talents which, by ordination into ecclesiastical ranks, are given to the ministers of the altar: how many and in what manner they are, as by the division of our Lord's gift.

Although other things have been said concerning the distribution of talents which have been given within the Church through ordination, (and) which bishops, priests, and deacons have received from our Lord for the administration of the offices and Mysteries of the Church, yet the tradition which is from the spiritual fathers, which with {187} correct examination they passed on to students as teachers of the truth, is the true and acceptable one. This is also manifest from the number and order of the talents. Thus a deacon has one talent in his ministry, but two others are added to a presbyter, so that he may have three talents in the ministry of his priesthood, one of the diaconate, and two of the priesthood. For first he receives the blessing of a deacon, and then he is allowed to receive the two talents of the priesthood by which he performs the divine and marvelous service. Then, when he draws near to administer the Baptism of those who come to discipleship through him, through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit they are born children of God and, as through a Mystery, they are sealed for the ways of immortality and expected blessedness. And then, when he approaches the holy altar at the time of offering up the oblation, and mystically offers the sacrifice of the living Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, there, like a skilled artist, he depicts mystically the Mystery of the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus our Life-giver. But for the bishop there are added to the three — that is, to the one of his diaconate and to the two of his presbyterate — two others, because of the ordination of the ecclesiastical ranks which spring forth beneath his control, when the gift is transmitted through his mediation and through his ministry in the likeness of fire, where from one flame many flames come into being, yet the first flame does not decrease. However, it is not lawful to receive the episcopate when one has not received first the diaconate and presbyterate. Because of this, the bishop has five talents without dispute: one in which he ministers in the likeness of the angels around the altar, and two others in which, according to the ordinance of our Lord, he perfects before the altar the absolution of many in the priestly manner, and two others by which his right hand brings forth various ordinations of different sorts. Therefore, through the five-fold talents the gift of ecclesiastical leadership is fulfilled, like the Torah in five volumes, or like a man with five senses, or like the hand with five fingers, or like the body with five parts, or like the divine economy with five phases, from the time the world began advancing unceasingly in its marvelous courses, until the end of its course, according to the decree which was at the beginning, which he drew up and marked out before the ages of the world without a beginning in his eternal foreknowledge, who called forth the world and it was made with a beginning and ending. And he will command it and it will cease from its course full of changes, and he will give it another beginning, a way higher than changes and beyond an end, and it will abide unendingly, beyond the comprehensibility of all that is made. {188} There are, then, five parts to the economy in this world: one which is from the first man until the flood; one which is from Noah, who became leaven and a substitute for the race, until Abraham the patriarch; and one is from Abram the Hebrew, who signified the Mysteries of the Lordly cross, and expected to see the day of Christ, and saw it and rejoiced[1], until Moses the law-giver, the first-born of the prophets; and one is from Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, until Christ, the end of searchings and the Fulfiller of the promises, and the Giver of the new covenant, and the Revealer of the awaited perfection and blessedness. The last part is from the appearance and revelation of our Lord from the holy Virgin until his appearance and revelation from his holy heaven. Then comes life from the dead, salvation, and the renewal of all in all. These things concerning the five-fold talents are sufficient, as by an orderly distribution, without confusion, and as by a demonstration which is made known from the Scriptures and from the world.

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[1] Ps. 15:4.

Nineteenth canon: concerning the honor of the Lordly and holy day, Sunday.

The Jews, then, observed the Sabbath Day when they were members of the household, but now they are driven from the household and are rejected as aliens, for they stretched out impious hands against the physical royal purple garments of the Son of God, though they did not have success. But on the same day which was hallowed, that is, on the rest (day) of him who is indefatigable and does not grow weary, as it is written, they were also occupied with divine things. However, since the law and the prophets were until John, and from that time the kingdom of heaven has been proclaimed, the members of the household have been given, in the place of the day of the rest — that is, of God — the day of the resurrection in the flesh of the Son of God, and in the place of a day of restorative leisure of men and beasts, (they are given) a day on which is perfected in type and perfected in deed the renewal of all in all. Instead of the last day of the week is the first day of the week, on which the seasons of this world began to be decreed, and on which the world to come began — began but does not end, whose course is unlimited — and on which Noah the just went out to the light from the darkness of the ark, the saving boat of the company of Noah, whose helmsman and deliverer, and the leader of its inhabitants, was the Helmsman and Orderer of creation, and on which also the godly Moses raised up the Tabernacle. And, what is greater and more perfect than all these things, on Sunday our Savior also shook and broke through Sheol in his resurrection, founded the Church, and proclaimed the kingdom of heaven. On account of this the children of the discipleship of life were commanded {189} to observe from evening to evening the day on which these marvelous things took place and are taking place, and to honor it with praises and with spiritual songs and holy lessons, and that they should be set right on it through gifts to the needy, by the resolution of disputes, by just judgments, and by love and mercifulness toward one another. For through sacrifices such as these one pleases God, as it is written[2]. Some of the faithful keep themselves from work and from the road on Sunday until the Church is dismissed, while others, as by the force of necessities which are a constraint upon their ready will, or by their own will, which is scornful and impudent and unresponsive like disobedient children, consider the Lordly day, Sunday, like Saturday or like Monday and do not honor it at all, that is, they do not wish to be burdened on it with the service of divine things and righteousness, which is enduring and indestructible, but they labor in the love of the purse which leads to sin and does not endure. The Greeks name the first day of the week "Kyriake", that is, "Lordly", for it is the "Day of the Lord", the day of salvation, a day which is ordained . . . . and beloved in its doings, and Christendom observes it and boasts in it, for in deeds it bears the symbolism of its pardon, salvation, and renewal.

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[1] Cf. Jn. 8:56.

[2] Cf. Heb. 13:6.

Concerning the pearl divers (about whom) you wrote to us, we inform you that if they go away of their own choice, while keeping Sunday they will be kept by it, and being justified on it, they will be blessed by it, for they are also, like us, disciples of the Gospel. But if compulsion beyond their control constrains them, you, as leaders who are nearby and know (of it), must take command of their affairs so as to help and not to hurt, in order that, if possible, they may be preserved from two things — from sin, and also from harm.

Twentieth canon: when there is no great need for it, whether one who takes a wife among [barren] women is blameworthy or blameless.

My mind has admonished me, then, that I should not answer anything to this question, for the leaders and teachers of the Church have not said anything concerning it, but your love has led me to answer it. If, then, one were to hand down that a man may not lawfully take a barren woman, it would provoke many barren women to perversity, for it would be by the force of the canons, as it were, and not from choice of the will, that they[1] consent to this. And because a free will is not mixed with it —(a will) which often would resist and be successful — (this enforced state) will fall from natural weakness which stirs up the lust of desire, and provocative perversity will be engendered — although there are widows who persevere in the constancy of widowhood and fulfill the promise by their own choice. A man, therefore, {190} who has children by his first wife who has died, and he takes a barren woman, not only does not need permission from the leaders, but he does not acquire blame. For even those who have barren wives, who were not previously conscious of their barrenness, and from subsequent trial became aware of their barrenness, are not permitted to divorce their wives because of an accidental disability which came upon them. Instead, they are even commanded to persevere and to obey to the last breath, whether their wives are fruitful, being visited with the assistance of grace, or whether in the pain of barrenness they depart from this mortal life, like the blessed patriarch, who was patient, received the promise, believed in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness[2], as it is written.

However, neither ought one to believe that a man who has no children will long to marry a barren wife, unless, perhaps, his mind is missing, for he would reject and count as useless the divine blessing, which is hidden, like leaven in a lump of dough, in the procreative power of our race, and is transmitted like a flash (of light) with (the sun's) sphere. This is difficult to believe, for no one longs for this madness of taking a wife for the sake of marriage without fruit, as though despairing, while he has no prior fruit to be his heirs instead of strangers, even as he was heir to those from whom he was born, according to the natural and divine law which accompanies our fashioning from the height of days until the marvelous transformation beyond sufferings and necessities.

He who does not submit to marriage, begetting, and procreation, which by the creative power of the Founder of all was established for the procreation and transmission of our race in the transient order, on account of a life-style of perfection which is exalted above any appetite which is mortally instigated, withdraws from them in his strength and in his wisdom through the life-style of perfection, in which passions and desires and necessities utterly do not hold sway. Instead, he delights in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy

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[1] I.e., the barren women.

[2] Cf. Rom. 4:22.

Spirit, and is rich and flourishing in faith, hope, and love, and takes delight in the good reports and praises which blessedly ascend, uninterruptedly and ceaselessly, from the blessed to the Most Blessed.

We wish you to know, then, that we have written and answered in three ways the questions which were presented to us by the love of learning which is in your venerability, that is, either instructively, reprovingly, or admonishingly: on the one hand, instructively concerning such things as are good and of necessity ought to be done, and such things (as are) blameworthy and not comely; but reprovingly (as) a rebuke mixed with zeal against the negligent and disorderly who are resistant; (and) admonishingly, (as) when judges and leaders employ judgment with {191} the censurable transgressors of the divine laws and the tramplers upon the paternal canons. These things, therefore, are very helpful to leaders and judges who teach, and to the led and judged who are (in the process of) learning, but all with a zeal which is wise and not harsh, and with love and pity, and with justice which is far from laxity, which is inappropriate in (dealing with) wrong-doers, and (far) from stubbornness and a harshness which does not have regard for the penitent, does not coax sinners, does not visit the sick, and does not bind up the wounded like Jesus our Life-giver, the heavenly Physician who freely heals with the medicines of his compassion the scars and sores of our nature.

And you should know this as well, that we have not, finally, given answer to your questions with an answer suitable to canonical legislation which, with definitions joined with anathemas, is set forth for the terror of disobedient children, but with a discourse which retains the customs of paternal and instructional teaching, interwoven with examples from nature and from Scripture, which coaxes to the love of good things, and warns (one) to flee from lusting after evil things, so that while revealing the how and why of the matter, it may enlighten and interpret for the reader, so that he may increase his wisdom.

Therefore, it is clear that the entire time of the course of mortal life, in which we are commanded to be pleasing in the pursuit of righteousness is this: three quadrupled, four tripled, six doubled, twelve phases bound in one cycle splendidly and wonderfully, which has two lights, one of which governs its set times, while the other governs its phases, and the beginning of the cycle is joined to the end of the cycle, and it goes round until the limits of time, as . . . . . . from the beginning, established in an orderly and helpful and wise fashion by him from whom is all, and of whom is all, and through whom is all, and to whom is all, and his is the glory, greatness, and worship for ever.

The bishops and brothers with us salute you. Grace be with us all, amen.

We think you remember, then, that the questions you wrote down and sent to us were thirty-three in number. In sense of meaning they did not amount to this number, and necessarily we disregarded the number of your devising, and made their number[1] correspond to the numerical sense, so that twenty questions might be added up which needed to receive answers from us, as also they did receive, according to our deficiency. Since there are some of them which were not answered, it is not because there were no answers, but because it was unnecessary that they should be (treated) by way of question and answer in writing, for they are plain to the knowledgeable, or because the leaders of the Church wisely administer them according to the custom which obtains, {192} for edification and not for destruction. You yourself must read those things which are written and add those things which are lacking. And you must bid us your prayer, attentive to God, for we are fulfilling the desire of your Christian love by answers to your questions which are profitable for any upright man and lover of teaching, the same which were written instructively, in the way of inquiry, between one who asks as a disciple, and one who answers as a teacher, and not in a synodical manner, within a council of fathers, as if by decree and definition they have been established in an authoritative fashion among many and set forth.

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[1] ܡܢܝܢܝܗܘܢ for ܡܢܝܢܗܘܢ.

As soon as there is "man", at the same time there is a certain man, because there is no "man" unless there is [a certain] man, and there is not a certain man unless there is "man"[1]*, the latter generally and the former singly, the latter generically and the former specifically, all of him*[2] *with all of them*[3]*, and all of them with all of him, these passing away and coming to naught successively, this one remaining in his properties wonderfully. This one to these gives what belongs to him, but the caused do not give to the Cause their properties. It is inexplicable and proper to God its Maker.*[4]

The twenty questions and, briefly, their answers are ended.

Again, the symbol of the correct faith of the catholic church, which guards the boundaries of truth, as the divine Scriptures teach.

Our blessed fathers, then, who gathered in Nicea and Byzantium, set forth the definition of the faith according to the tradition of the catholic church, which the apostles and blessed fathers, according to the command of our Lord, proclaimed to the nation and to the nations in all (that is) beneath heaven. Indeed, it was revealed through the church to the hosts on high. We too, therefore, have agreed and do agree unwaveringly with the guides of our faith, the captains of the hosts of Christ's army, the apostles and holy fathers, while we have preserved and are preserving without error the mystery of our faith until the last breath. Also the teaching of the knowledge of the truth has been preserved within the church of God without alteration from the height of days until now, as the tables of the covenants, the scrolls of the Torah, the scepter of Aaron, and the jar of the manna were kept in the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord for many generations. Those things, when they were extant, were an analogy to these in the Church, as witnesses the approved among the apostles, the godly Paul, for {193} Moses was found trustworthy as a servant in his whole house, (and) Christ (was entrusted) as a son with his house[5]. Let those who wish to understand simply and prudently the spotless and undefiled faith study these writings of the incorruptible faith, which in its uprightness is exempt from alien expressions, freeing us from adopting the thinking of those who prejudiciously and thoughtlessly are carried away without investigation some way or other by whomever it may be. Therefore, it is right to tell the mystery of the faith simply and beyond all deceit and cunning, as much as the order of the apostolic faith requires, our hearts being sprinkled and cleansed of an evil conscience, for the accuracy of the truth requires this as well, that we may remove and separate simplicity from all unsoundness which is alien to the truth, for some in simplicity have accepted the faith, but others in guile perversely wish to hear from us concerning the wisdom of our faith. But we apostolically speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which was hidden but has been revealed, trusting in the strength of the divine Trinity, in the Trinity exalted above all wisdom and all investigation, confessing thus:

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[1] "Man" in quotation marks indicates human nature, or humanity. The contrast with a "certain" man is the "Nestorian" way of explaining the difference between "nature", ܟܝܢܐ, and "hypostasis", ܩܢܘܡܐ, or between the abstract and the concrete.

[2] Presumably this dislocated and interpolated section is from a polemical argument concerning the manhood of Jesus, and the "him" referred to is Christ.

[3] I.e., specific "men".

[4] This last paragraph is clearly extraneous matter that has somehow been incorporated into the text.

[5] Cf. Heb. 3:5,6.

The creed which was composed by Mar Išoʻyahb:

We believe, then, in one eternal God, infinite and without beginning and without end, [who times and ages and endless intervals ...... from his Being,] the living Spirit who is hidden and incomprehensible, whose nature, power, and authority have no limit or boundary; knowing all before all, the Giver of knowledge who alone is wise, the Maker and Lord of all creatures, (whether) visible or invisible, at the indication of whose will the worlds were fashioned and set in order, that which is above with that which is below; good Governor, just Judge, wise Administrator of this world and the world to come, Giver of all graces, unwearying and unfailing, unchanging and faultless; Being without a cause, Cause of all, from whom is all, because of whom is all, of whom is all, and to whom is all; one timeless divinity, three qnome without a beginning, who are perfect in all and lacking in nothing, one God who is known, confessed, and worshipped in three qnome of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who by an ineffable wonder are distinct but united and equal, and without commingling are joined but not mixed, like and different, on the one hand like in a unity of nature, on the other hand different in a distinctness of qnome; one Father with whom there is no other father, who begets eternally though he is unbegotten, Cause without cause, {194} Maker of all by whom all was established; one Son with whom there is no other son, begotten eternally but unbegetting, Caused from Cause, Cause of all along with the Father, without whom nothing at all which exists came into being; one Holy Spirit with whom there is no other spirit, proceeding without begetting or being begotten, proceeding from the Father eternally, Caused from Cause, Cause of all along with the Father and the Son, who investigates everything, even the depths of God; one nature which cannot be made two, three qnome which cannot be made four, perfection in unity, expression in trinity, one nature eternally, in which and with which are also its qnome eternally, with which the Son is begotten eternally, and with which the Spirit is proceeding eternally, at once nature and at once qnome, at once Father, at once Son, and at once Holy Spirit; one God and not three gods — let the rabid Marcion mourn; three qnome and not one qnoma — let the erring Sabellius wail, and with him Paul the Samosatan as well, for they denied the Being[1] of the Word who was before the ages.

The faith in all (these) things is marvelous and cannot be explained, by which paganism, choked with error, confessing various godheads and lordships, is condemned and rejected, and by which Judaism, rejecting the mysteries and parables and predictions of the truth, and deprived of the perfect confession of the riches of the Trinity, is reproved and judged, and by which heresy, which joins fraud and deceit to the truth and to the simplicity of the faith, is silenced and struck dumb, and in which Christianity, which is steadfast at every moment — more than the fixedness of heaven and earth — increases, is glorified, and boasts in the hope and in the confession, unchanging, unconquerable, and unmoved, which Christianity learned from the Holy Spirit through the apostles and through the prophets concerning the manifestation of God the Word, and concerning his dispensation in the body, and concerning the embodiment which took place for us and for our salvation, unto the renewal and reformation of all creatures.

For because of the great love (with) which he loved us he departed from the bosom of his Father by way of good pleasure, not by way of change, and came to the world, though he was (already) in the world, as it is written, the Hidden One revealed in the flesh. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He became, but was not changed. He who was the equal of God emptied himself and took the likeness of a servant. He took but did not increase, for in his generation as well as his taking his essence remained without change and without addition. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God the Word, Light from Light, descended and became embodied, and became man by way of economy, beyond alteration or change. Our Lord God, Jesus Christ, who was born of the Father before all worlds in his divinity, was born in the flesh from the ever-virgin Mary in the last times, the same, yet not in the same. {195} The Word became flesh in an inseparable union and dwelt among us. O the depth of the riches of the faith! He became but was not changed — let the Eutychians and Apollinarians lament! He took but did not add — let the Photinians and Paulinians wail! Again I say, let the faithless and the schismatic hear, and let them be united to the Church. Let them not be as tatters and rags torn from the harmony of agreement, and let them not tear the perfect robe of faith and of Baptism, which is woven with divine skill through the operation of the Lord, the Spirit. The soldiers, that is the crucifiers, did not venture and did not dare to rend the garment of Christ. You too may not rend the perfect robe of the unity of the apostolic Church. Instead, hear the truth of the faith and remain within the ecclesiastical folds with the whole Church, saved by the blood of the great Shepherd of the flock, Jesus Christ the Son of God, God over all, born in his divinity eternally from the Father without a mother. The same, but not in the same, was born in his humanity from a mother without a father in the last times, suffered in the flesh, was crucified, died, and was buried in the days of Pontius Pilate, and rose from the dead after three days. On the one hand, Christ, the Son of God, suffered in the flesh, while on the other hand, in the nature of his divinity, the same Christ the Son of God was beyond sufferings — Jesus Christ, impassible and passible, the Creator of the worlds and the recipient of sufferings, who for us was impoverished though he was rich. God the Word accepted the insult of sufferings in the temple of his body economically, in a supreme inseparable union, though in the nature of his divinity he does not suffer, as our Life-giver said, "Destroy this temple and after three days I will raise it up."[1] Because the Jews in their stubbornness thought that he spoke concerning the temple of stones, the Evangelist explained the word of our Savior, saying, "But he spoke concerning the temple of his body."[2] Our Lord explained the entrance — by way of union and not by way of mingling — into the parṣopic union when he said, "No one has ascended to heaven except him who descended from heaven," the Son of Man who descended from heaven[3], "the Son of Man who is in heaven."[4] Indeed Christ, who descended from heaven without removal in his divinity while not (yet) endued with a body, and was, in the infinitude of his divinity, also in heaven, the same, in his humanity, was exalted to heaven while he did not lose his visible nature, according to the angelic declaration, "This Jesus who has been taken up from you to heaven will come just as you have seen him ascend to heaven."[5] Christ, the Only-begotten and united, the Only-begotten of his Father, united and inseparable, whose divinity is undying, incorruptible, and unalterable, and whose humanity is not taken away, or hidden, or destroyed. As Severus said, who was bishop {196} in Antioch, and was anathematized and cast out into exile: "The Word did not suffer and die, but the Word was giving strength, when he suffered and died. However, the Word raised up his own body from the dead after three days." Severus said these things when he was not (yet) engaged in denying the taking, and not persuaded that suffering and death touched the Word, but was speaking things which are similar (to the truth) and trustworthy. Again, the holy one as well, the great teacher of the Church, the blessed Mar 'Aprim, speaking in one of his compositions: "It is a great marvel, for the Son who wholly dwelt within a body dwelt in it while not being limited. His entire will was in it; (yet) his entire extent was not (confined) to it. Who is able to explain it? for while his wholeness dwelt in a body, again his wholeness dwelt in all."

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[1] ܐܝܬܘܬܐ.

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[1] Jn. 2:19.
[2] Jn. 2:21.
[3] Sic.
[4] Cf. Jn. 3:13.
[5] Acts 1:11.

These things in brief concerning the salutary confession of the faith will suffice. Whoever does not agree to these things denies the truth and deceives himself.

The synod of Išo'yahb the catholicos, and the letter to Ya'qob, the bishop of Darai, and the answers which he requested from him, are ended.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR SABRIŠO‘
596 AD)

Again, the synod of Mar Sabrišo‘[1] the catholicos.

In the month of 'Iyar[2], in the sixth year of the preserved and kept by the help of heaven, the victorious and mighty and merciful pacifier of the world, the King of Kings, Kosrau, during the venerable administration of the father of fathers and shepherd of shepherds, our blessed father, ascetic in his body and spirit, Mar Sabrišo‘ the catholicos-patriarch, when we metropolitans and bishops of various places, whose names are placed beside our seals, were gathered in the presence of his holiness, it was reported in our presence that there are some who wear the religious garb who are doubtful in their mind concerning the true faith of orthodoxy. They rise up against the reliable teachers of the Church, full of contrary teachings, and corrupt the minds of the simple. Sometimes they say that sin is implanted in nature, and some of them say that the nature of Adam was created immortal at first. They abolish the litanies and spiritual songs[3] which were composed by the trustworthy teachers {197} in which the duality of the natures of the Son is revealed and made known, on the grounds that they do not agree to these things with their minds, and they reject the interpretations and reliable tradition of the blessed Theodore, the approved and reliable doctor. It seemed good to our father the patriarch and to all of us bishops alike that we should remove and reject all hateful things and cast them out of the Church completely, driving out, treating as alien, and anathematizing all those who remain in them without correction, and that we should confirm and establish the sure faith which is the beginning and ending of Christianity and the salvation of the souls of believers, and that in the liturgy all things should henceforth continue which were established by our holy fathers in the spiritual service of the Church as they have continued and have been handed down in the eastern region in all churches, monasteries, and holy habitations which are beneath the authority of the administration of the patriarchal see of his fatherhood, who is confirmed and placed in the divine administration at the great church of Koke.

It seemed good to his fatherhood and to all the metropolitans and bishops to write this composition of the faith, and in the ordering of all things proper, as is incumbent upon us, with all prudence, without injury and without change, to guard the reliable and apostolic faith of the catholic Church, which was made known through the exposition of the holy prophets and by the proclamation of the blessed apostles, the same which our fathers, the venerable and holy bishops, the three hundred and eighteen who gathered in the city of Nicea, wrote and delivered to us according to the will of the Lord, the Spirit, which accurately and plainly teaches us the confession which is in one glorious nature of the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and reveals and shows us the glorious mysteries of the dispensation of God the Word, which at the end of times he perfected and fulfilled in the nature of our humanity, the same by which paganism is vanquished, which acknowledges a multitude of gods, and Judaism is judged, which does not acknowledge a Trinity of qnome, and all heresy is convicted and condemned which denies the divinity and humanity of our Life-giver, Jesus Christ. (We) accept it with the exact meaning of the holy fathers, which the illustrious among the orthodox, the blessed Theodore the Antiochian, bishop of the city of Mopsuestia, "the Interpreter of the Divine Scriptures," explained, with which all the orthodox in all regions have agreed and do agree, as also all our venerable fathers who have governed this apostolic and patriarchal see of our administration have held, while we anathematize and alienate from all contact with us everyone who denies the nature of the divinity and the nature of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, whether through mixture {198} and commingling, or compounding or confusing, introducing, with regard to the union of the Son of God, either suffering, or death, or any of the mean circumstances of humanity in any way, into the glorious nature of his divinity, or considering as a mere man the Lordly temple of God the Word, which, in an inexplicable mystery and an incomprehensible union, he joined to himself in the womb of the holy Virgin in an eternal, indestructible, and indivisible union. Again, we also reject one who introduces a quaternity into the Holy Trinity, or one who calls the one Christ, the Son of God, two sons or two Christs, or one who does not say that the Word of God fulfilled the suffering of our salvation in the body of his humanity, being in it, with it, and toward it in the belly, on the cross, in suffering, and for ever, inseparably, while the glorious nature of his Godhead did not participate in any of the sufferings. But we strongly believe, according to the word and intent of the Scriptures and the traditions of our holy fathers, in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, who was begotten before the foundations of the world in his Godhead, spiritually, without a mother, and in the last times was born from the holy Virgin in a fleshly manner without the intercourse of a man through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is, in his eternal divinity and in his humanity from Mary, one true Son of God, who in the nature of his humanity accepted suffering and death for us, and by the power of his Godhead raised up his body uncorrupted after three days, and promised resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and a new and indestructible and abiding world for ever.

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[1] Ruled 596-604.

[2] May.

[3] I.e., from the Liturgy. The reference is to Miaphysite captives of war with Rome who are re-settled in Persia (and other immigrants) who are obliged to conform to the Church's practices there, including the use of the native offices.

We therefore, all of us, agree to and keep this true and apostolic faith, we and all the flocks which are entrusted to us. Should there be anyone who ventures to separate and not accept this symbol of the true faith, we consider him a stranger, driven out, and outcast from all contact with Christians until he accepts correction and agrees to this true faith of the Church.

We also cast out and anathematize all who reject the interpretations, traditions, and teachings of the approved teacher, the blessed Theodore the Interpreter, and attempt to bring in new and foreign traditions full of humbug and blasphemy, rising up against the true and accurate teaching of the blessed one and of all the true doctors, the teachers of the schools who have continued in his footsteps, established his teaching, and handed down the true and accurate faith of orthodoxy without corruption in this our eastern region.

Again, we are watchful and alienate from our fellowship all who hand down or say that {199} sin is implanted in nature and that men do not sin by their own choice, and all who say that the nature of Adam was originally created immortal.

Whoever among us has dealings with brothers or sisters who live near one another in the name of virtue, or men who take about women with them in this same name — these we teach and correct, whether they are men or women, and if they contend and are not obedient, we expel them from our flock and treat them as alien from the Church and the Holy Mysteries until they correct themselves.

Whoever has in the area of his administration any among the priests in the villages, or among hermits, or among abbots (who) neglect in their churches or monasteries or cells the canons which are administered in the cathedral of Koke and in all the churches of the East which are led canonically and legally by orthodox bishops — inasmuch as we have heard that there are some who omit the litany of the altar, which is "Let us all in fear", and hymns such as "Give thanks to the Good One," and "The light of Christ's Epiphany," the same which acknowledge distinctly the duality of the natures of the Son — those, then, who are found to be such we rebuke, profitably and in an edifying manner, and if they are persuaded and reform, and minister according to the canons which are administered in the cathedral of Koke, it is very advantageous for their profit and for our happiness. But if they persist and are not persuaded, we anathematize them from the Church and from reception of the Holy Mysteries, and we hold them alien from fellowship and contact with our people until they reform.

Whoever among us disregards or neglects any of these things, he too, with them, is anathematized from all orders and ranks of the priesthood and from the Church and Holy Mysteries until he perfects and completes everything mentioned above in this writing, and none of us is allowed to do otherwise by the "Word of God."

We all in the assembly of metropolitans and bishops of various places who were present, with counsel and thought and good will, aside from any compulsion and constraint, have sealed and confirmed these writings with our seals and have signed (them), and we have persuaded the venerable in his holiness, the head of the fathers, our distinguished father, Mar Sabrišo' the catholicos-patriarch, that he too should confirm with his seal these writings, and he (so) affirms, seals, and attests, and he blesses those who have agreed and do agree with them, and anathematizes and suspends those who stand against them in any way.

We have sent a copy of these writings to all our brother metropolitans and bishops who for various reasons of urgency were not present {200} with us in this council, that they too may perfect and fulfill these things diligently in their dioceses and in their flocks, and affirm and seal them. If any of them ventures to rise up against this enactment, which according to divine will was ordered and established by the father of fathers and the rest of the metropolitans and bishops who were gathered with us, he is anathematized, alienated, and excommunicated from all ecclesiastical contact until he agrees to and confirms these things written above.

The agreement and covenants of the solitary brothers who are called "of Bar Qaiṭai".

In the month of 'Adar, in the eighth year of the accession of the preserved and kept by the help of heaven, our victorious and merciful lord, Kosrau the king of kings, lord forever, in the administration of the venerable and elect of God, our blessed and holy father, Mar Sabrišo' the catholicos-patriarch, we composed these writings — we, 'Abon, and Mattai, and Yazdad the presbyters, and Yaunan, Mar 'Aba, Sabrišo', Yoḥanan, and Yoḥanan the deacons, and 'Abraham and Paṭros the religious, the brothers from the habitation of the new monastery and of the monastery of Bar Qaiṭai, and (of) the other habitation in the neighborhood of the monastery — who were sent in the name of Brikišo' and 'Aba the abbots and the whole brotherhood with them — and we affirm them.

While it is duly proper for all the rational to be led according to the discretion of reason, for through grace this was granted to them doubly by the Creator of nature, in the creation generally and by the law particularly, yet even more (is it proper) for anyone who through his own freedom of will separates himself to be a doer of deeds rather than a hearer of words — as it is written, "The hearers of the law are not just in the presence of God, but the doers of the law are justified"[1] — for this is the mark of discernment: to understand discreetly and regard rationally, that one may perform and fulfill whatever is proper to the will of his Creator, and approve himself and reveal to himself and others, through perfection of his life-style, the way which leads to the land of life and light, according to the Lordly word of him who knew all before creating all, who said, "This is the completion of the law and the fulfillment of the commandments: love towards God in sincerity of soul, and love towards men in purity of mind."[2] For there is no one who is rational {201} and upright who is not described and included within this unchanging prescription — but especially those who profess with the outward appearance, which is confirmed by the bodily eyes, that they are accomplishing somewhat more than the rest of their fellows in the fulfillment of their life-style. For the primeval Enemy and ancient Adversary of our nature continually seeks to harm the mind that conducts itself well, not only of those who are new in their discipleship and have (just) begun in their instruction, so that he may cut short their intentions and deprive them of their hope, and they may put themselves to shame and acquire harm — for to him, indeed, happiness may be considered to be his shame — but also against those who are established in their thoughts and confirmed in their minds, and, according to the word of our Lord, have laid the foundation of their building upon the true name[1], he applies himself and strives, by the deceit of insiders and the tumult of outsiders, through scandals which these engender against them by the murmuring of words, the backbiting of reports, and the scandal of deeds, so that they might fall from their life-style and leave off their ways through the despondency of their thoughts.

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[1] Rom. 2:13.

[2] Cf. Mt. 22:40.

In this our insolent age, according to what our sins have merited, he has desired to accomplish the same also toward our congregation through men who fulfill his will. But he who performs all according to the intention of his own will did not neglect his fashioning, but in his mercifulness he sent from the height of his holiness and drew us out of the abyss into which we had nearly sunk, as it were, through their machinations. Even more than we asked[2] or thought, he put it in the mind of the good and merciful king, our victorious lord Kosrau, the King of Kings, lord forever, that according to the will of his Godhead, the king should openly give a commandment for our congregation, that from this time, which is above set down, and onward, our congregation should be governed under the administration of the fatherhood of our venerable and excellent father, Mar Sabrišo‘ the catholicos-patriarch, and of the patriarchal see which is in Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the cities of Beit 'Aramaye, and act and perform according to the laws and commandments which we are given by him and by the other fathers who will afterwards hold this see, and we and those who will come after us in the habitations from which we were sent shall submit to the see. We have (so) agreed, and with us and like us all the congregations as well among which and in which we live and in whose name we were sent (also agree).

Before all else, as we have observed and held until now the true faith unwaveringly, so from now and for ever we retain in our soul and in our mind the correct faith of the worshipful and glorious Trinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and we {202} also acknowledge completely the taking of the humanity of our First-fruits, our Life-giver, our Lord Jesus Christ, from the seed of the house of David, as it is written, and his perfect and inseparable union with the only-begotten Son, God from God the Father. We accept and agree with the whole blessed company of the fathers with whom the whole church of the eastern region, which is submitted to this aforesaid patriarchal see, agrees. We believe in their faith and endeavor to meditate in the Holy Scriptures and in the writings, interpretations, and teachings of our holy fathers, the blessed Theodore and all his fellow laborers in the teaching of the truth, whom all the church in the eastern region, which is submitted to this patriarchal see, holds and embraces, and in the Egyptian fathers, and in all the fathers who perfected, cherished, and honored this rule by which we live. And we continue unceasingly, as much as we are able, as until now, so from now on, in prayer and in the evening and morning service, and in the hours of night and day in the psalms[3] of the blessed David. We also fulfill the work of pure and holy fasting as our order and the manner of our promise require, and are careful that, without necessity, we do not depart from our habitations and cells to (another) place without the command of our superiors, those who were commissioned by the fatherhood of the patriarch in the rulership of our habitations. We are not allowed to go about in villages and cities — except for Visitors who have been designated and sent by our rulers — or in a habitation in which those are gathered who have not yet dwelt singularly and alone in a cell. We perfect, fulfill, and receive the Holy Mysteries each day for the pardon of our debts and the forgiveness of our sins according to the declaration of our Savior, and on Sundays and holy feasts all of us together come to the habitation and fulfill the divine service and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and we take delight in the fellowship of the divine Mysteries according to the ecclesiastical order. Then we return to our cells and habitations and endeavor with all our hearts and with all our souls that by our ways, by our words, and by our life-styles we may be, show ourselves (to be), and be recognized (as) an occasion of the praise of God the Lord of all, and an occasion of profit for our individual selves and our lives.

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[1] For ܥܠ ܫܡܐ ܕܫܪܝܪܐ. Could this be ܥܠ ܫܘܥܐ ܕܫܪܝܪܐ? "Upon the true rock." Cf. Mt. 7:24-25; Lk. 6:48.

[2] ܫܐܠܝܢ for ܫܠܡܝܢ.

[3] ܙܡܝܪ̈ܬܐ for ܙܡܝܪܬܐ.

We have determined for ourselves that if, God forbid, there is found among us anyone who, either from the operation of Satan or from his own ignorance, is known to do something which is destructive of religion[1], or of our ways or promise, the same we (will) chasten and admonish with all diligence, and restore him to the way of truth according to the command of our Life-giver. But if he does not correct himself, we (will) surely consider him an alien to our habitation and from our congregation. We (will) consider him as a tax-collector and as a pagan, as we have been commanded. We are welcomers and honorers of men, whenever they happen to be with us, and we are building, completing, and reclaiming the habitation which is called {203} "Bar Qaiṭai", as we have promised and have accepted before the patriarch. We strive to act in all our affairs so that they please God, approve us, and become profitable for men in the fear of God, and stir up and arouse the children of the Church to the praise of God.

We have confirmed these writings with a judgment upon ourselves: if we should transgress against one of these things which are written above, or against those things which are commanded by the fatherhood of Mar Patriarch, we shall be anathematized by the "Word of God" from the church, the Holy Mysteries, and all contact and ecclesiastical fellowship until we have corrected ourselves and are re-admitted by his fatherhood, and we have sealed these statutes and this agreement with seals by our hands, and have appealed to the friends of God, the elect bishops, Mar Surin, bishop of Šharqard, Mar 'Aḥišma, bishop of Lašom, Mar Qaša, bishop of Taḥal, and Mar Milis, bishop of Šenna, and they have confirmed them with their seals.

The letter of Mar Sabrišo' the catholicos to the hermits in the habitations which are called "Bar Qaiṭai"

The wretched Sabrišo', the servant and minister of Christ Jesus, by ecclesiastical authority, royal command, and with paternal solicitude writes sadly and sets right mercifully those who have set themselves apart by voluntary agreement to the beloved and honored name of divine pilgrimage, rejoicing in those who accept the things written by Brikišo' and 'Aba the presbyters, the heads of the habitations of the monasteries and cells which are situated round about Mount Šigar, welcoming in our Lord the ecclesiastical concord. Hearty greetings, with all the Christian brotherhood who with them and like them labor in spiritual service.

Who would not weep bitterly and sorrow dolefully over those things (which) have occurred in the great prophetic and apostolic archives of holy Church, saved by the holy blood of her Bridegroom, uttered by him who was at the beginning a murderer, through instruments suitable for his guile. In the case of the holy city, Jerusalem on earth, when the devastation of the Babylonians — those who were a type of the Accuser and bore likenesses of the Evil One — passed through it, when the blessed Jeremiah saw that she was deprived of her {204} beloved and honored citizens and was emptied of the priesthood which bore the type of Christ, and her feasts and festivals and new moons and Sabbaths were destroyed and also her sacrifices and oblations had come to an end, and the holy temple had ceased from divine service, and her priests and prophets were killed within the divine temple, and her dear and beloved offspring were dashed against the stones, and virgins were dishonored, and pregnant women were torn open with the sword, and the Edomites, their neighbors and kinsmen, bearers of the type of rebellious demons, said to the Babylonians, with clapping hands and dancing feet, "Lay bare, lay bare, O Babylonians, the foundations of Jerusalem, that they may no more be established,"[1] the holy one lifted up the eyes of his mind and opened his mouth and said, "I saw the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and the high places, and they were moved. I looked, and lo, everything was chaos."[2] And he composed mournful lamentations and dirges about her, but especially about the ark, which bore the type of divine knowledge. It too, like the other ordinary things, went into the captivity of the erring nations, the worshippers of deaf and mute creatures. And he said with amazement, "O that it were granted me (that) my head[3] were water and my eyes fountains of tears, for I have wept day and night without ceasing over the great ruin of the daughter of my people[4]," and over the divine law which is trodden underfoot, and the Lordly presence which has ceased from her, and the prophetic visions which have been withheld, and the heavenly voices which have been silenced, and divine pardon which is far off.

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[1] Lit. "the fear of God."

But if the prophets wept bitterly in their day for those things which were material and temporal, and wrote them down for the generations and tribes and nations which were to come, that their memory would not cease from the world, but that they might remain for a general warning, that every man might shun evil, draw near to the good, and become a pure and holy vessel suitable for the use of his Lord God unto every good and perfect work, how much more, then, is not the soul, which is eternally incorporeal, worthy of great weeping and bitter remorse, which has heard the Lordly words from the pure and holy mouth of the eternal Son of God, and has also been sanctified along with the body in holy and sanctifying Baptism, and has taken delight in the holy and ineffable Mysteries of the heavenly King, who from the great love which he had for the race of men gave himself up to suffering and death for our salvation, and said in his life-giving Gospel, "Whoever offends one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for him if he had not been born," and again, "It would be better for him if the mill-stone of an ass be hung on his neck and he be cast in the depths of the sea"[5]?

Now a wasteland does not produce holiness, or men of God, nor does a desert take delight in divine revelations, nor again does renunciation of possessions give anyone participation in spiritual things. For a wasteland sanctifies {205} someone when the soul agrees with the body in divine intimacy, and the desert makes worthy of glorious revelations when the mind is mingled intoxicatingly with divine influences. Poverty enriches those who truly impoverish themselves, according to the apostolic word which says, "While we possess nothing, we hold all."[6] Solitude, then, is admirable, and renunciation is very glorious, and self-denial is exalted. Who would not marvel at true separation from the conflicts of the confused and turbulent world? But the all-wise, the blessed Paul, bears witness, saying, "Blessed is he who does not condemn himself through something which he sets apart."[7] Indeed, especially when one recalls the saying of the high priest of the Jews, the blessed Onias, who was also deemed worthy of divine revelations concerning the great presumption of Heliodorus, the pagan and fornicator, who sought to seize the treasures of the divine temple. He saw horses of fire which trampled and kicked them with their hooves, and they were beaten harshly with rods of gold[1]. Again he saw the holy city which was full of injustice and wickedness, and he spoke in this way: "O that I were given swift wings like a young and harmless dove. Then I would have lifted myself like a bird from within Jerusalem, the mistress of strife and judgments, the killer of prophets and stoner of the righteous, and dwelt in the barren desert, like a turtle-dove that loves the wasteland." For, as it is written, there are natural customs and special and singular laws for each and every one of these species — even for the wild beasts and domestic animals and birds of heaven. As we learned from the prophetic mouth, "The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's stall,"[2] and, "The turtle-dove, the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming in,"[3] and they never change anything or alter anything[4] from whatever has been established for them wisely by the Maker who is alone wise[5], as it is written; and also (as we learned) from the wise man as well, who said, "Imitate the ant and learn from his ways, for he does not sow or reap, but he prepares bread for himself during summer, and during the harvest he stores up his food."[6] Also, it seemed good to us, as rational and discerning men, that we should advise and admonish, suitably and profitably, those who receive the true knowledge of the fear of God, that they should not be without life-giving laws, and should not be led without profitable commandments, for there is One who is without law, as was said by the prophetic mouth, "You, O Lord, are without law."[7] Indeed, there is a law for the heavens that they may not be shaken, and for the sun and the moon and the lights (there are) their customary ways — "he establishes the moon for the seasons, and the sun knows the times of its settings."[8] For the air (there are) the motions of the breeze, for the earth the motion of growing things, and for the fishes and creeping things of the seas their laws and customary ways, and all the rest which are not necessary to relate.

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[1] Cf. Ps. 137:7.
[2] Cf. Jer. 4:23-24.
[3] ܪܫܝ for ܪ̈ܫܝ.
[4] Jer. 9:1.
[5] Cf. Mt. 18:6; Mk. 9:42; Lk. 17:2.
[6] Cf. 2 Cor. 6:10.
[7] Rom. 14:22.

{206} It has been reported to us by reliable men that there are among them brothers who otherwise and in a contrary manner conduct themselves, and they are not persuaded to remain under the subjection and command of their superiors, but walk according to their own rule, acting as they wish. When they desire to move to another place from their cells, they depart without the knowledge of the superiors of their congregation, roving about wherever they wish. This is improper, not only for monks and hermits, but also for all who conduct their lives simply in the world, for how is it possible for the body to conduct its life without the head to give life? When we heard these things, it seemed to us that the three congregations there in the desert which now exist — the new monastery, the monastery of Bar Qaiṭai, and the other congregation to the East of the monastery, and if there are others who have come and settled either on the mountain or in the desert who are of the same faith as the Church — should be under the rulership of Brikišo' and 'Aba. They are not allowed to depart to another place for as long as they are in those habitations, and go to villages or cities, and send blessings or greetings without the knowledge and command of the leader. And according to the assurance which you offered to the King of Kings, that "we shall be under the authority of the patriarchal see of the Church of the East," and, "the patriarch commands in his mercifulness, and we too have agreed to and accepted this command and have ordained that it should be thus," none of the metropolitans or bishops of the province there or of other provinces is allowed to transgress against this royal and patriarchal command, including those corrupt (men) who have disturbed and confused the obedience of many. I am addressing the bishops, archbishops, and faithful, as well as outsiders: both those things which took place through the influence of Satan prior to this time, and (those things which) were spoken by incautious men among you, such may no longer be heard from you or take place among you, but instead those things which are pleasing to God, and gladden the hearing of insiders and outsiders. But if, on the contrary, those things are reported which have been reported (previously), it is proper to obey God rather than men — as it is written, "Those who sin you must admonish before everyone, that also the rest of men might fear"[1] and beware of the example of sinners. Again, "The evil-doer will be recompensed according to what he did wrong, and there is no respect of persons."[2] We say these things to the wise: do not place confidence in anyone, as the word of prophecy says, "Accursed is he who will trust in man and make a fellow human being his arm,"[3] but "He who boasts should boast in the Lord."[4] See that you are not neglectful, lest you be struck by the rock a second time.

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[1] Cf. 2 Mac. 3:25.
[2] Isa. 1:3.
[3] Jer. 8:7.
[4] ܡܕܡܢ for ܕܡܢ.

[5] Rom. 16:27.
[6] Cf. Prov. 6:6,8.
[7] Hab. 1:12.
[8] Ps. 104:19.

We pray before our Lord {207} that he may preserve you with assistance from his presence, and that you may conduct yourselves according to the calling with which you were called and please his Lordship in all good works. May divisions and strife and scandals, which are stirred up by insiders and outsiders, cease from all the world and from your congregation, and may you live in his mercifulness the rest of your life and (the lives) of those who come to you in tranquillity and peace[5]. Let our greeting be given to all the Christian brotherhood. The fathers, the bishops with us, and the brothers with us send you greetings. Pray with us for the tranquillity of the catholic Church, the peace of the world, and the calm of the habitable world, and especially for the profitable life, victory, and eternal success of our venerable, victorious, and merciful lord, Kosrau, the King of Kings, that he may be kept in health of body, gladness of soul, and in the success of all his intentions, according to the will of the Lord God, whom we supplicate to keep you, and to make his peace and tranquillity remain with you. Amen.

The synod of Mar Sabrišo‘ the catholicos patriarch is ended.

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[1] 1 Tim. 5:20.

[2] Col. 3:25.

[3] Jer. 17:5.

[4] 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17.

[5] ܫܠܡܐ for ܫܡܐ.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR GRIGOR 605 AD)

Again, the synodical canons which were established by Grigor[1] the patriarch and the bishops who came to his election.

In the month of Nisan, in the fifteenth year of the preserved and kept by the help of heaven, the mighty and philanthropic, our good and kind lord Kosrau, the King of Kings, after the passing of the elect among the saints and excellent Mar Sabrišo‘ the catholicos patriarch, (this synod convened) through the grace of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who promised the disciples of his life-giving Gospel, and in their name all who were to become disciples of his life-giving teaching, "Lo, I am with you until the end of the world."[2] According to his promise he has revealed his care in all generations to the holy Church, and even now has established in this age our victorious and merciful lord, the King of Kings, to be a mediator of the great care of our Savior toward us, and he has brought about for our people new and marvelous things, {208} the like of which have never taken place. For the fathers, the leaders of the Church, that is, the bishops in all the land, he commanded that those far off should come, on riding animals of the king, at the expense and supply of the kingdom, to the venerable door of the King of Kings, and those nearby he urged to quickly come to the palace, that they might elect a head and leader for the catholic Church, under the administration of whose headship are all sanctuaries and orders of all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ in the dominion of the Persians. When this was made known to all of us who were deemed worthy by grace to shepherd the holy churches of God in the dominion of this glorious kingdom, the mistress of kingdoms, our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with praise[3]. We gave thanks to the exalted Lord whose dominion is an eternal dominion and whose kingdom is for ever, and are (even now) giving thanks, for he has shown us his good care and his surpassing oversight through the benevolence of the mighty and powerful, our victorious lord, the King of Kings. According to the kind command of his lordship, we diligently came together from the dioceses over which we have been entrusted with the pastorate of the Church through the suffrage of grace to the venerable and glorious gate of his kingdom. And while great and exalted was our summons from our dioceses, yet even more astounding to us and to all the doctrines and religions which are in the dominion of his kingdom — that is, to all men — he kindly sent us, the least servants of his lordship, an excellent embassy, for the sake of the election of the person to be chosen for this great work of the Lord. He commanded that, being far from all human prejudice, with an upright intention which befits all members of God's household, we should elect for ourselves a faithful and wise head, adorned with every species of excellence, to stand at our head, and to shepherd us with the wise understanding which is appropriate to the head of the administration over all ranks of the Church. Then our Savior and Life-giver, Jesus Christ, set to work through his hidden operation, which goes beyond all the thoughts and understandings of rational (men), dealing with us in his mercifulness in all our deliberations, sowing at the same time (seed) in the mind of Kosrau, the King of Kings, and (so) by the command of his lordship we elected the venerable, holy, and excellent in his wise understanding and his glorious and divine ways, Mar Grigor, the teacher and interpreter of the divine books, and we raised up at our head a man who, by the grace of God, from youth to old age has been instructed in the teaching of the divine Scriptures, and whose contemplation was on the meaning of the spiritual books. He caused the good seed of heavenly teaching to spring up in the land through every diligence and excellence, the good fruit appropriate to his divine labors, for his soul meditated on the things of God. {209} He is a good teacher, (both) in the true faith, and by the brilliance and exaltedness of his godly life-style, for as soon as he stood at our head, he, our father and the head of us all, Mar Grigor the catholicos patriarch, with much diligence and the watchfulness appropriate to his high rank, at the beginning of his speech to us he made known those things which the holy Church was about to inherit through his godly pastorate. With appropriate care he exhorted and admonished us all concerning the faith of the Church, explaining that it is the beginning of our life and the cause of our benefits, and that we must hold it purely and steadfastly, and meditate upon it. Therefore, at the beginning of his headship and pastorate over us, he brought forth good fruit first and gave it to us instead of presents and favors.

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[1] Ruled 605-608.
[2] Cf. Mt. 28:20.
[3] Ps. 126?2

All of us, with one soul and one mind, and with unity and concord with him, assented, and according to the order and custom which continues in the churches of the East[1], we placed in these our writings an agreement which is according to the mind of the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers who gathered in the city of Nicea, which follows the correct meaning of the godly expressions and the holy writings, and agrees also with our instruction and our holy Baptism, which was established during the time of the worthy of a good memorial, the God-loving Constantine the faithful king, through the operation of the Holy Spirit for the destruction of all heresies. And (we also included) such things as (came) afterwards, although from the fathers, the one hundred and fifty bishops who gathered in Constantinople in the days of Theodosius the Great, the faithful king, against the heresy which sprang up from those who blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and those things which were appropriate, which they added and placed with it[2]. We hold, agree, and believe that one and the same is our mind and our faith in the Holy Trinity and the Mysteries, which are through the dispensation of our Lord in the body, which our Fathers taught and showed us. It is our confession that (there is) one divine nature, the eternal Being, the Creator of all creatures, the Cause of all, having no beginning and having no end, who exists continuously without end, who is beyond the extremit(ies) and limitation(s) of passion, change, or variation in any way. Nothing ever rules or prevails over him. Holding all, guiding all, he is the first and the last, who indicated our renewal through the prophets in the Old (Testament), and revealed (the same) through the apostles in the New by way of his beloved Son, whom he appointed the Heir of everything, and through whom he made known the Trinity of his qnome, which are without beginning and without change, one incomprehensible divinity, one eternal nature, which is known in three qnome of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who through the First-fruits[3] from us effected the emancipation and renewal of our race. For the likeness of God took the likeness of a servant[4], according to the apostolic saying, and in it perfected and fulfilled the exalted dispensation which was for our salvation — the likeness of God in the likeness {210} of a servant, one Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom everything was made, perfect God and perfect man, perfect God in the nature of his Godhead, perfect man in the nature of his humanity, two natures of divinity and humanity, the divinity preserved in what belongs to it, the humanity in what belongs to it, joined in a true unity of the one parṣopa of the Son, Christ. The divinity perfected the humanity through suffering, as it is written, though suffering, change, or variation did not enter into the Godhead in any way. We have agreed with this faith and have (so) held, and all the holy fathers have agreed, and we also, in pure agreement of our minds, do (now) hold to and agree with it, anathematizing all who in any way lapse from the same.

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[1] Reading ܡܕܢ ܢܚܐ for ܡܕܢ ܒܪ̈ ܟܐ, as per the suggestion of Chabot.

[2] That is, the additions to the Nicene Creed which were added at the First Council of Constantinople.

[3] 1 Cor. 15:23.

[4] Phil. 2:7.

However, because we have heard that there are some who vacillate and incline in their minds this way and that, and they love new discoveries of vain ideas that they may make a vain show before onlookers and listeners, and devise new meanings for the mind of our fathers, as they also study to alter the meaning of the Holy Scriptures through novelty of truth, we altogether as one have decreed concerning this, that each and every one of us accept and agree with all the interpretations and writings which were composed by the blessed Mar Theodore the Interpreter, bishop of Mopsuestia, a man who was found trustworthy by divine grace over the treasure of both testaments, the old and the new. Like a river abounding in its floods, he waters and nourishes the children of the Church with the true understanding of the meanings of the Scriptures, in which he was instructed by the Holy Spirit, during his life and in his death. For as a reliable history of our fathers bears witness, all the ecclesiastical leaders in his time designated him to pierce through with the spear of his zeal and of his great knowledge all the fathers of error, to protect the children of the Church from the turbulence of conflicts (of) the disturbers of the truth[1], and to wrap them within the armor of his true teaching. For there is no one today who fulfills this labor of teaching in the Church if he is far from the writings of this glorious and godly man, who is not groping, as it were, in the darkness of ignorant error, not knowing where to begin and where to end. For indeed, all our true fathers, from his time until today, who committed to us through their teaching this true faith, meditated upon his writings, and agreed with and handed down his trustworthy meaning. Thus we remember this as well, that in the divine council which took place in Beit Huzaye in the city of Belapaṭ, in the month of Nisan of the twenty-seventh (year) of Piroz, the King of Kings, in which the blessed Mar Barṣauma, {211} bishop metropolitan of Nisibis, and Nani[2], bishop metropolitan of Prat, were the rulers and chief men, they decreed concerning this teacher and his writings thus: "Concerning the evil reports which heretics have promulgated against him in various places, let no one among us have any doubt about this holy man, for in his life, among the teachers of the fear of God, he was illustrious and was considered the finest, and after his death all the books of his interpretations and discourses were approved and cherished by all who understand the wise meaning of the divine Scriptures and honor the upright faith, for his books and interpretations preserve the faith without spot, according to the meaning appropriate to divine teaching which is set forth in the New Testament, and they destroy and reject all the teachings that war against the guidance which is through the prophets, and against the Gospel which is through the apostles. Therefore, if anyone ventures, secretly or openly, to calumniate or to revile this teacher of the truth and his holy writings, let him be anathematized by the truth." This, then, the holy men decreed, those who were renowned in wise understanding and famous in godly teaching. Therefore, we too, agreeing with these things, have decreed and defined, that according to the custom of trustworthy (men) and their handing-over (of the same) to us, all who fulfill the work of teaching in the churches and in the congregations which are in this glorious kingdom, should meditate upon the writings of this man, and they should do their teaching in accord with his interpretations within the hearing[3] of their listeners. They should not be distracted by the notions of those who write or speak and act against his words and his understandings, those who, if they possess anything laudable, they have come upon and discovered it from the riches of the writing of this godly man.

Therefore, all of us with one agreement have decreed and defined that everyone who has rejected or does reject the definitions and opinions of this man, a teacher of the fear of God, openly or secretly, by word or in writing, and has affirmed or does affirm things which are contrary to his books, and does not agree with all his mind to those things which in the wisdom of divine grace were spoken and written by this godly man, by the "Word of God" who holds the height and the depth, let him be bound and anathematized in heaven and on earth, and may the wrath of God be upon him, with the "amen" of all Christianity.

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[1] For ܘܢܣܬܪ ܠܒܢ̈ܝܗ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܡܢ ܫܓܘܫܝܐ ܕܬܟܬܘ̈ܫܬܐ ܕܫܓ̈ܘܫܘܗܝ ܕܫܪܪܐ. This appears to be corrupt. I have substituted ܕܠܘܝ̈ܢܐ for ܕܫܓ̈ܘܫܘܗܝ.

[2] ? perhaps, "'Aḥai". See above in Synod of Mar Babai.

[3] Lit. "in the ears".

Because this also was reported in the council of the fathers, that there are some religious, presbyters, deacons, and brothers who do not hold specific offices in churches or monasteries, and they do not go to the schools, but they dwell alone without employment {212} and unprofitably, insinuating themselves into houses and not obeying the leaders; [and there are also those who have sisters dwell with them,] and again there are sisters who do not have a husband according to the apostolic command, but they go round about among houses and villages, and they lead women captive, as it is written; and again there are slothful men, in name brothers, who purchase huts for themselves in the midst of villages and near cities and monasteries, and while they do not dwell in monasteries or submit themselves, they deceive the mind of simple men, harass leaders, and inflict their turbulence alike on churches, monasteries, and schools, ruining honest men by their words, and by this hoping to be able to fulfill their wickedness in destructive idleness:

Therefore we have decreed that every brother, presbyter, or deacon without his specific office, either in a church, or in a monastery, or in a school, or in remote congregations of hermits, and every woman who is not married and does not go to a monastery of sisters, or she has no specific function in the Church, or a brother who takes sisters about with him, and sisters who go about with men, or a brother who dwells alone near villages and monasteries, or brothers who conduct themselves without the command of a bishop or his just will, by all the community of bishops, with the agreement of the whole Church, they shall be anathematized from all ecclesiastical contact with the "amen" of all Christendom. Also, every bishop who looks aside and allows them in his jurisdiction, and it is made known in the council that he does not act as it is written above, shall be reproved by the community and receive sentence.

This too was reported in the council, that there are some who dwell in monasteries and in congregations of hermits who venture to act presumptuously against the ecclesiastical orders, and because of the corruption of their minds they excise and reject the canons which were established by the orthodox fathers, and do not say the litanies "Praise to the Good One," and "The light of Christ's epiphany," and "Let us all in fear and reverence," and do similar things which are a corruption of the upright faith.

Because of all these things we have decreed that wherever it is known that these things are done, their perpetrators shall be anathematized and expelled from all ecclesiastical contact, and every bishop of whom it is known that they are under his administration, who does not act as it is written, shall also be placed beneath the ban.

This too was reported in the council of bishops, that there are some who have set apart places and have built monasteries, and they have given them possessions and left them to those in the neighborhood, or {213} to men who are caretakers of the places, but they did not give letters of assignation of the property to the bishop and leaders who govern the jurisdiction in which the monasteries exist, and those who built the monasteries have departed, and those to whom the property of the places was committed have either seized the property for themselves, or provided very little for these places from the ingatherings of the property, taking the remainder for themselves.

Concerning these things we have commanded that legal documents, or a copy of legal documents, of the assignment of the property which is given or assigned to monasteries, shall be given to the bishop of its jurisdiction with seals of reliable (men), and those who hold the property shall exercise administration in the places with the knowledge of the bishop, as the bishop knows what is useful and serviceable in the administration of the places. They are not allowed, by the "Word of the Lord Christ," to take or give anything for themselves or for others.

This too was reported in the council, that there are some bishops who dare to transgress against the ecclesiastical canons, crossing their own boundary and ordaining illegally.

Concerning this, it seemed good to the council of bishops, according to the law laid down by our fathers of old, that here too, among us now, none of the bishops is allowed to perform ordination for the catholic Church except for the designated places which are placed under his jurisdiction, and whoever does otherwise shall receive rebuke.

These synodical writings, which were given at the beginning of the administration of our venerable and holy father, Mar Grigor the catholicos patriarch, we have confirmed with our seals, we:

Yausep, bishop of Prat, metropolitan of Maišan,
Yonadab, bishop of ’Arbil, metropolitan of Ḥdayab,
Boktišo‘, bishop of Karka dBet Slok, metropolitan of Beit Garmai,
Teadoros, bishop of Kaškar,
Posai, bishop of Karka dLedan,
Gabril, bishop of Karka dMaišan,
Yoḥanan, bishop of Beit Nuhadra,
Surin, bishop of Šharqard,
Posai, bishop of Hormizd-’Ardašir,
{214} Yoḥanan, bishop of Rima,
Ṭimate’os, bishop of Beit Bagaš,
’Aḥišma, bishop of Šoštere,
Maruta, bishop of Qardo,
Gabril, bishop of Nhargor,
Borazmihr, bishop of Beit Dasen,
Ḥnanya, bishop of Maḥoze dAriwan,
Šem‘on, bishop of Piroz Šabur,
Ya‘qob, bishop of Šuš,
Klilišo‘, bishop of Ma‘alta,
Gabril, bishop of Ḥarbgelal,
Mar ‘Abda, bishop of Beit Daraye,
Paulos, bishop of Barḥis,
Qaša, bishop of Taḥal,
Piroz, bishop of Ṭarihan,
Ḥnanišo‘, bishop of Azerbaijan,
Natniyel, bishop of Sirzor,
Barḥadbšaba, bishop of Ḥalwan,
Yazdkost, bishop of Beit Madaye,
Šabur, bishop of Šenna.

And so that these writings may be established and confirmed, I too, Grigor, by grace patriarch, have agreed to, sealed, and confirmed (them).

This manuscript was sealed with the seal of the catholicos and of all the bishops and metropolitans.

The synod of Grigor the bishop patriarch is ended.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR GIWARGIS

674 AD)

{215} Again, the synod of our holy and blessed father, the blessed Mar Giwargis[1], catholicos-patriarch, and of the venerable fathers who gathered and came to the land of the Qaṭraye.

The wise in all, our good God, has ordered for the moment a temporal life and a mortal body for the race of men, and he has given the weakness of mortality power over them at all times, so that by this those who are familiar with the fear of God may acquire for themselves the profit of their souls through the persistence of (their) efforts. However, although virtue and the love of God are naturally implanted in us by our wise Creator, yet because of the tendency of the soul and distractions of the body many (have been left) to be in subjection to the deceit of forgetfulness in this life[2]. Therefore, the exalted care of our God, worshipped above all, did not leave us without the help and support of laws, spiritual writings such as lift up the mind to the true good. In every generation and in every nation he has ordered moderate laws suitable to times and to those in time, so that the recollection of the mind might not be deprived of its profitable help through straying and wandering after many things which produce for it a falling-short of the fear of God. First the omnipotent Lord fittingly established helpful warnings by way of command for those of the house of Adam and of the house of Noah and Abraham until Moses, and led (them) to the fear of his name. Then, by the hands of the mediator, Moses, he established a book of manifold laws for the former people, who are a shadow of the mystery of the new. Then, through the glorious appearance of his Beloved, who shone forth like the sun over the extent of the habitable world, he committed to his Church the Gospel of life, that by his life-giving laws, higher than the earth and transporting to heaven, she might be guided in the correct pathways of truth until she should receive the exalted promises of the life (which is) lifted up above death, in which there is no weakness or deviation, nor the need for laws and commandments such as these. In the same way, the holy apostles, and the priests and teachers after them, established laws according to time, want, and necessity, and they taught men to continue in the path of justice. Therefore very many helpful laws abounded in the entire Church in the West and in the East, which were established by our holy and venerable fathers {216} and were written down in their time, such as were needed, the use of which afforded unlimited help to men.

However, at all times the variety and intensity of the infirmity of men demands that, according to circumstances which are present among various nations and in various places, those which the time in its severity revives against them, those who are set apart by the grace of God for the leadership of their souls should take care to effect diligently their helpful correction, both orally and by the setting down of writing, which for extended times are needed for the enhancement of the mind's recollection. Therefore we too, who are in the difficult time of the end of the world, upon whom the lot of ecclesiastical leadership has fallen, in that it so pleased the compassion of our Lord that the fullness of the ministry of the life of their inhabitants should be transmitted by our supervision to the islands of the sea, those whose locations are situated in the south of the world, have found various things that need to be renewed for these Christ-loving peoples by the establishment of correct laws which keep those who fulfill them within the boundaries of the fear of God.

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[1] Ruled 660-680.

[2] There is a syntactical problem in this sentence, perhaps caused by the loss of a verb governing ܠܫܥܒܕܐ.

In this month of 'Iyar, in the fifty seventh year of the dominion of the Arabs, when, after a visitation of the islands and other places, we arrived at the holy Church on the island of Dairin and stayed there,

I, Giwargis, by the grace of God catholicos-patriarch of the East,
and I, T'oma, by grace bishop metropolitan of Beit Qaṭraye,
and I, Išo'yahb, by grace bishop of the Island of Dairin,
and I, Sargis, by grace bishop of Ṭarihan,
and I, 'Esṭapanos, by grace bishop of the Mazonites[1],
and I, Posai, by grace bishop of Hagar,
and I, Šahin, by grace bishop of Haṭa,

having worked diligently upon all matters which were in need of correction, there was discovered among these matters various things, the correction of which especially needed to be set down in a canonical writing, some such things as, although they were previously set forth in former synods by our blessed fathers, yet necessity required that their recollection should also be renewed by us in this writing.

Thus we begin by the strength of the Holy Spirit to determine matters and to ordain their correction with the agreement of us all for the help of the inhabitants of these lands.

First Canon: {217} that the ecclesiastical leaders and teachers ought to declare the correct definition of the faith at all times of teaching before the community, for they are appointed for this, that the hearers of their teaching might know the truth of Christianity and firmly hold to their confession.

Concerning the word of teaching which is spoken before the community of the faithful by the bishop in his office, or by anyone who is a teacher, on feasts or on Sundays or on memorials of the saints: a capable teacher is obliged to season his words with the tasteful salt of the teaching of the sound confession of Christians for the hearing of the community, for thus our Lord commanded the preachers of his good news in the Gospel: "Go and make disciples of all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything which I have commanded you."[2] For it is evident that they did not simply baptize in the qnomic and particular names of the Holy Trinity and then leave those who were made disciples without sound teaching of the confession which pertains to them, that they might confess in any way whatever, for in this way their discipleship would be for shame and derision if they were not supported[3] by accuracy in what they received, in which is concealed the salvation of their lives.

Therefore, we have decreed that in every homily and exposition which is delivered by teachers on a day of the dominical feasts or holy Sundays they should relate to the people a brief word concerning the faith, so that they might be able to counter[4] the heretics if they happen to ask them how they believe and confess.

Second: concerning all churches and monasteries which are built by the God-loving faithful in a city or its neighborhood: their construction shall be with the knowledge and permission of the bishop, and they shall be set in order as he directs.

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[1] Chabot suggests reading ܡܙܘܢܝ̈ܐ for ܡܪ̈ܘܢܝܐ.

[2] Mt. 28:19-20.

[3] Reading ܢܣܬܡܟܘܢ for ܢܣܬܟܡܘܢ with P.

[4] Reading ܢܐܦܟܘܢ for ܢܦܟܘܢ with P.

All Christ-loving faithful who through fervor of faith and love of good things desire to build a church or monastery in a city or its environs should make known to the bishop their will and the intention of their mind. Thus they may receive from him permission for this if it is proper to fulfill their will, for if, indeed, he has once been entrusted by God with the souls of those committed to him and with the administration of those things which help their life, they are not allowed, on their own, {218} to bring to their completion even those undertakings which they consider noble without the permission and command of him who is entrusted with their care, for even if there are places which are deprived of churches and monasteries, it belongs to the bishop to provide for their establishment.

Therefore, the faithful are not allowed, without his permission and command, to undertake the building of a church or a monastery, but all churches and monasteries which are built in any village or town shall belong to the catholic Church, and shall be ordered under the jurisdiction and be under the administration of the bishop.

Third: concerning the election of ecclesiastical leaders: they shall be chosen according to excellent life-styles, knowledge of doctrine, uprightness of faith, and fitness for the ministry, and they shall not receive the apostolic ministry, in which the salvation of men is hidden, by way of personal prejudice, favoritism, or reprehensible gifts.

When one of the bishops somewhere departs, the election of another is decreed, as is known from the canons set forth by our blessed fathers, and in this way: according to the apostolic laws, by common consent, one shall be set apart who, according to life-style and excellent ways, may be entrusted with the priestly ministry, the clergy and faithful of the see of the bishop notifying the metropolitan about this — (about) who is agreeable to them for the ministry — and he should become acquainted with him and appoint him and inform the patriarch concerning him with a letter of agreement from the people. According to the command of the patriarch his order shall take effect and his consecration shall be completed with all orderliness. In the case of those who with a human intention conduct a hypocritical election for the sake of a (particular) person, or administer divine affairs by way of an abominable bribe or reprehensible gifts in a damnable election such as this, their election must be annulled by the fearful "Word of the Lord."

Fourth: concerning a bishop: it is not proper for him to lower himself for small matters of the stewardship of the Church or the administration of matters of its expenses, but he should commit the service of administration such as this into the hands of others who are trustworthy, that he may not let abuse fall upon him from imprudent mouths.

{219} The administration of the substance of all properties of the Church and the supply of its expenses and the keeping of its goods and how they are to be administered the bishop shall commit into the hands of persons who are trustworthy, those who also have the agreement of the clergy and faithful that they are fit for this work. They shall administer all these things with all purity, in the fear of God and according to the command of the bishop and the knowledge of the clergy and, if necessary, the notable faithful, so that the bishop may not only abstain from lower business, but that he may have leisure for the work of teaching and instruction, and to set in order censurable things which take place among the faithful, proclaim the word of truth, and edify the souls of men. Thus the holy apostles abstained from some things, but honored others in which profit was hidden as well as the salvation of the lives of the faithful. In a character worthy of his dignity, a bishop should utterly refrain from lowering himself for the administration of carnal matters such as these which are set down above.

Fifth: concerning those things which rightfully belong to the bishop, [whether] ecclesiastical ordinations of presbyters and deacons, or the assigning of a church or monastery to those who are suitable for their ministry: none of the faithful is allowed to interfere[1] in their administration, for they belong to the bishop.

Such things as rightfully belong to the bishop are his own, and their administration is placed under his authority, whether the transmission of ordination to those who are deemed worthy, or the assignment of a church or monastery to one who is suitable for its ministry. According to what the bishop desires, he will provide for their ministry in the fear of God, only informing the clergy and the noteworthy faithful about them that they may be given a share in the knowledge of what he does. However, the faithful are not allowed to command authoritatively in anything concerning these things, by the "Word of our Lord."

Sixth: concerning law suits of Christians: those things which are to be adjudicated should be done in the Church before persons designated by the bishop with the agreement of the community — from among priests and faithful (laymen) — and should not go outside of the Church before those who are pagans or unbelievers.

Law suits and strife which take place among Christians should be adjudicated in the Church, and they should not go outside like those who are without law. (They should be adjudicated) before judges who are designated by the bishop with the agreement of the community from among priests attested in the love of truth and the fear of {220} God, and possessing the knowledge and ability to judge matters, and they should not (act) otherwise, according to the impetuosity of their mind, taking their affairs outside the Church. But if there is something which should be concealed from those designated for the decision of contentions, let them take their dispute before the bishop, and let them receive from him a resolution of those things which vex them. But none of the faithful is allowed to usurp for himself, on his own authority, the deciding of disputes of the faithful without the command of the bishop and the agreement of the community, by the "Word of our Lord", as long as no necessity arises for the command of the secular rulers.

Seventh: that those who wish to enter the clergy and receive ordination are not allowed to receive any of these things by way of a bribe, or to seek positions in a foreign jurisdiction in order to be blessed outside of their own diocese by a bishop not their own, and afterwards, by the persuasion or force of those in authority, receive permission for their ministry, that is, a position in choice places.

Those who wish to enter the clergy or receive ordination should act legally and as is proper to the ecclesiastical canons, and not according to the irregularity of secular affairs, for it is unseemly that we should perform divine things in the likeness of these worldly things, according to the intensity of our desire, because of a love of honors.

Therefore, such as these are not allowed to seek refuge among secular rulers, and seek choice places or access to ordination through a threatening letter, or even with the help of faithful (laymen), and (thereby) utterly condemn themselves to reprobation. But each one may apply himself in his order, rank, and time, with the agreement of his fellow clergy and by the will of the bishop — that is, he may seek these things of honor in the Church — but only one who is renowned among his brothers, or excels in discipline, or in excellence of life-style or attention to noble things, for because of these things it is right for him to be distinguished, either in an office or in honor, and should be raised by the bishop to a position of honor — that is, a valued (one). But one may not venture to accept any ordination outside his diocese and by a bishop who is not his own. If he should venture to (so) do, he shall be stripped of his ministry. But if one should do any of these things, and should demand them with {221} irregular help, the same shall become a stranger to all the honor of the ecclesiastical ministry, by the "Word of our Lord."

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[1] Lit., "stretch out his hand".

Eighth: concerning the demand for tribute which the clergy make on one another at their entrance into the Church: according to the ancient usage they may not (so) demand unless it be something the bishop knows them to be capable of doing or giving.

Those who newly receive ordination or enter the Church should willingly and according to their capacity satisfy their brothers whom they find (there). But the burden and weight of demands which are called "dues" and "offerings" may not be required, according to former custom, not only since to do this is something alien[1] to the fear of God and their ministerial rank, but also the grievous time, because of want, does not permit those who are called to the ministry of the Church to be afflicted with a burden such as this, for many may be hindered because of need, so that they shrink from the religious garb and are banished to other employments.

Therefore, those who are called and enter the clergy shall not be allowed, in any way, to demand any of these things from one another.

Ninth: concerning religious women who are called "virgins": what is their ministry in the Church, and what does their appearance require.

Women who have once separated themselves to the title of virginity and the chaste religious garb should be distinct in their form of clothing and cut of hair. Before everything they should learn the recitation of the Psalms, and should attend to the liturgy of the Church and the hours of their own hymns. They may sing hymns following the biers of the departed on a day of burial, as also they may sing hymns on a day of vigil for days designated as memorials for the departed. However, they are not allowed to go to the graveyard in order to sing hymns there. But there should be appropriate prudence concerning these things for the sake of weak (men), and they should gather in one or two places in the cities in their habitations, and one of them who has the status of old age and is attested in a life-style of chastity should be entrusted with their rulership. They should effect their coming and going at her command, and she should bind upon them laws which keep them from chattering and preserve them from the railings and murmuring of outsiders and members of the household. But for the fulfillment of ecclesiastical ministry, let there be separated from them one who among all of them is excellent, and let her be ordained a deaconess. She should {222} anoint with the holy oil those women of mature age who are baptized, and she should arrange the business of Baptism for them in those matters which are deserving of modesty.

Tenth: that none of the clergy is allowed, without the command of the bishop, to depart from his church and city.

All of the clergy joined in the ministry of the Church should have a steady rule and laudable life-style, whether coming or going, as those who are ministers of the glory of God and intimates of the Mysteries. But they are not allowed to depart from the Church and city to another place, or to appear before the holders of worldly authority in a matter or cause, without the permission of the bishop. Whoever transgresses against these things shall be anathema.

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[1] Reading ܡܢܟܪܝܐ for ܡܟܪܝܐ.

Eleventh: that a bishop ought to render diligence toward those who are left at a young age by their parents, keeping for them, in all the fear of God, their inheritance without loss until they come of age and are able to retain their own property.

(The) children (of) those who have departed and left (them) at a young age should have the care of the bishop. He should investigate and discover, (from) both their paternal and maternal uncles, what has been left by their parents, and he should establish for them a steward over everything who fears God and is attested in honesty, and he should commit them to (the steward's) oversight. In the same way, with the knowledge of the paternal and maternal uncles of the heirs, there should be management of the children, their expenses, and their upbringing[1], and preservation of the property by those who are attested in the fear of God until such time as the heirs are able to hold what belongs to them, all things being completed with the knowledge of the bishop, that nothing may be lost to the orphaned children or fraud served. Whoever transgresses against this shall be under the decree of the "Word of God."

Twelfth: concerning the confusion and disorder of those who give themselves the name and appearance of hermits though they are far from its meaning.

It is necessary for those who desire, for the love of God and a contempt for such things as are visible, to separate themselves from the world and to live the chaste life of naziritehood, to first become acquainted with the teaching of the writings, and to know well {223} those men who have gone out for the sake of (this sort of life). Thus they should be instructed in a habitation concerning the life-style and receive the garb and work in a cloister according to the order which prevails. In the same way they should remain in a cell under submission to the head and in observance of the paternal canons. Those who illegally, and (not) in accordance with this way which we have described, give themselves an outward show, though they are deprived of all knowledge of the writings, only desiring to seize for themselves vain glory from the people by the shaving of the head alone, but with an absence of all things which are appropriate to their life-style, and dwelling in corrupt places without submission to a head and without the observance of the rules of the superior of their order, such the bishop should drive away and not allow to wander about and lead the simple astray. They must be proscribed from the name and garb of monks, by the "Word of our Lord."

Thirteenth: that a woman is not to be married to a man without the consent of her parents and the mediation of the holy cross and a priest who gives the blessing.

Unmarried women who are betrothed by the house of their parents, should be betrothed to men according to Christian law, as is the custom of believers, with the agreement of their parents, with the mediation of the holy cross of our salvation, and with a priestly blessing, for since it is not easy for Christians to offend the intimacy of legal marriage — like the rest of the peoples who are alien to the fear of God — and to be joined with another, it is necessary and very helpful that the contract of betrothed (men) and betrothed (women should be) in the presence of the Fashioner of our life and Giver of our salvation, so that, if they should break the covenant of their intimacy, they will have an Inquisitor, the Sign of our victory, he by whom all our hidden things are revealed and our deeds tested before the fearful judgment-seat of his glory. They should alike begin faithfully, with a priestly blessing, that they might be able to complete with a blessing the bond of their intimacy in accord with their expectant hope. But if they transgress against these things so as to desire to be married in some novel fashion, and they despise the law which has been set forth, should they at any time break faith with one another, since they are also deprived of a priestly blessing, let them be separated from one another without recourse and not be deemed deserving of release from their oppressors by those who are appointed as judges, (and) along with these things they should also be anathematized by the Church.

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[1] ܬܪܒܝܬܗܘܢ for ܬܪܣܝܬܗܘܢ.

Fourteenth: that Christian women ought not to be married to pagans, {224} who are strangers to piety.

Women who once have believed in Christ and have desired to live a Christian life must guard against marriage with pagans with all their strength, since intimacy with them brings to them customs which are alien to piety and imparts to them a dissolute will.

Therefore, Christian women must utterly avoid dwelling with pagans, and anyone who ventures such (shall be) far from the Church and from every honor of Christians, by the "Word of our Lord."

Fifteenth: concerning the meeting of believers at the Church, that it ought necessarily to be at the evening and morning hour in a comely order which is suitable for believers.

Believing men and women should assemble at the Church in the evening and the morning without neglect, except for the constraint of necessity, for they are not allowed to stay (away). Not[1] even if they set apart for themselves a place of prayer in their own homes may they think that prayer by themselves is sufficient for them without fellowship with the community. Nor again, when they come to the Church, should they pray secretly in haste, apart in a certain place, and then depart, but they should have fellowship in prayer with the community which comes together, and should remain to the conclusion of the reception of the priestly blessing. So also on holy feasts and designated days they should not forsake the common assembly of the Church and depart to habitations and monasteries, and the assembly of the Church and the honor which is appropriate to it be (thereby) profaned by the greater part of the people. These things, then, we have so decreed without the force of the "Word of God."

Sixteenth: concerning those who marry two (women): they are defiled and transgress against the law of Christendom.

Those who are in name believers and orderly must refrain from the pagan custom of marrying two women, and guard themselves prudently against the condemnation of the laws as those who have once been hallowed by the Baptism of Christ, and have been separated far from the service of uncleanness, which is practiced by the peoples who are strangers to piety. For in this way the blessing of God is multiplied to them through the keeping of the laws of the fear of his name. But if there are some who foolishly scorn this, and (in addition) to their legal wives dare to take others, whether afar or nearby, whether free women or handmaids, by the name of concubines or otherwise, and, being admonished to turn from the service of uncleanness, they are not persuaded, or they profess correction but are false, such as these must become strangers to all the honor of Christians, by the "Word of our Lord."

{225} Seventeenth: concerning the disorderliness of believers who scorn the honor of the Holy Mysteries.

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[1] For ܐܦܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܠܐ, dropping the ܐܠܐ.

It was reported to us that some Christians in this land, after receiving the Holy Mysteries and leaving the Church on holy days, hasten to the taverns of Jews to drink wine, and in their madness they dishonor the holiness which they have received through contact with ungrateful Jews — and this when taverns of Christians are not lacking in which they may fulfill their lust by the drinking of wine according to their custom.

This, therefore, we have rejected and abolished, that it may never more exist among Christians, and if anyone should transgress and venture so to do, he shall be constrained by the bishop through ecclesiastical penalty.

Eighteenth: concerning the burial of the departed, and concerning those who mourn without order.

Departed Christians shall be buried in a Christian manner and not as the pagans, for it is the pagan custom to prepare the departed for burial with choice and costly raiment, and to make much lamentation for them with faintheartedness and despair as a sign of unbelievers.

Therefore we have determined, with the decree of the "Word of our Lord," that Christians are not allowed to bury their departed with silks and costly raiment, but they shall be enshrouded in believing hope with simple vestures which are not very costly. Also, those lamentations which crazed women make in the place of mourning must come to an end, as well as the great expenses for those (women) who gather at the place of mourning. Whoever transgresses against these things shall be under the anathema of the "Word of God." The limit of the journey of women with the bier shall be as far as the place at which consolation is spoken. Beyond this place they shall not be permitted to go.

Nineteenth: concerning the bishop and what is due to his honor, and that believers who are placed in authority are not allowed to demand tribute from him.

The honor[1] of the bishop who fulfills his ministry well and is diligent in his labor should be set apart by his flock in all things which are appropriate for him to be honored by and gratified, but believers who hold authority are not allowed to demand of him the poll tax or tribute, as though from an ordinary man, for he bears the burden of their governance in the fullness of its service, keeps watch over their souls by pastoral law, and bears their difficulties.

Therefore {226} they are obliged to honor him in this matter and not to demand the poll tax of him like the rest of men. If they venture (to do) this, let them know that they become debtors to justice.

Concerning the canon which was established about the simplicity of garments for the burial of the departed: because there was a little resistance by some, we have committed freedom of action to the bishop of the diocese, that according as he sees and understands is expedient he may arrange for and allow the vestments of burial. However, let them allow no overly costly or very choice vestments for interment.

We have therefore set forth these things by the strength of our Lord and his Holy Spirit for the assistance of men through the succor of grace. May our Lord grant in his mercies to us, the caretakers of his people, who are established as overseers of these things, that in all things which are pleasing to his will we may live in excellence of ways and in the keeping of his glorious laws all the days of our life, amen and amen.

The synod of Mar Giwargis the catholicos is ended.

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[1] Perhaps "honorarium". Since the latter part of the canon deals with making monetary demands, perhaps the first part refers to monetary gifts as well as other sorts of honoraria.

{227} Again, the letter of the same Giwargis, the catholicos patriarch of the East, which was written to Mina the presbyter and chorepiscopus in the land of the Persians, in which he instructs concerning the divinity and humanity of Christ, and that it is not as the corrupters of the orthodoxy of the church have conceived, that God the Word was changed and became flesh in his qnoma.

Giwargis the sojourner, by the grace of God catholicos patriarch, to our God-loving cherished friend and our brother in our Lord, Mina, presbyter and chorepiscopus, may peace be multiplied to you in Christ, Our Lord and Savior.

I have received and read those things which your kindness wrote and sent to me last year, the fifty-ninth year of the dominion of the Arabs — and those as well which were in this, the sixtieth year — and I have heard prior to this time from your acquaintances, and from many who have come from you to us, concerning your reliability and fervency of faith in Christianity, and your diligence for alms, and the ways which you possess. But I have also heard, particularly from last year on, of the excellency of the care of God which has been over you, for he did not deprive the fervency of your faith of the truth of his confession, and he did not leave you to continue to your destruction in ignorant error in crooked pathways, with a concept contrary to the truth of the glory of God. Instead, he has led you to the truth of the confession which we properly owe, that he may be glorified uprightly for the dispensation which he perfected for our salvation and for the renewal of all creatures. He did not abandon your kindness to fellowship in the wickedness of speech of the blasphemous to become corrupted, but he mercifully enlightened your mind, that you may glorify God, the Creator, Life-giver, Savior, and Renewer of all, with an orthodox faith.

From all those things which you have written, and from all those things as well which I have heard concerning you from many, I have fitly rejoiced and thanked God. (I thank him) as well because you, my lord, in those things which you have written and sent to us, have asked us to bestow upon you a benefit more excellent than all, that is, that we write {228} and make known to you briefly and enlighteningly, as far as we are able, concerning the correct faith in God and the praise befitting his name, for we are obliged to praise his divinity on account of his dispensation which he perfected for the salvation of us men. While divine matters are not easily apprehended or understood by feeble-minded creatures, yet in so far as God in his compassion has exalted the contemptibility of our dust, even this elevation, that in part we might understand and speak of divine things — as by his Holy Spirit, through his righteous elect from of old, and through the prophets and holy apostles whom his grace set apart and whom, in generation after generation, he sent to enlighten the world and to guide men as much as it is possible — briefly, we write to your brotherhood, making a beginning hereafter:

We confess one true God, the everlasting and eternal and pre-existent Being, Creator, Fashioner, and Lord of all (things) visible and such as are invisible, the imperceptible and the perceptible, the spiritual as well as the corporeal, who is hidden and more exalted in his nature than spiritual beings, even more than the invisible state of spiritual beings is (exalted above) us, who by nature possesses all-sufficient grandeur, the capability[1] (of producing) all good things, and fullness of incomparable wisdom. (He is) unfailing help, the Good (One) and Benefactor of all, merciful, compassionate, and pitiful, abounding in his gifts, knowing all and discerning all, for nothing of all that exists or has existed escapes from his knowledge. He holds all and guides all, the Governor[1] and Keeper of all, the Quickener of all those who receive life, higher than all, exalted above all, Holder of all the ends (of the earth), bestowing all benefits, Patron and Helper of all, without beginning, without end, without equal, without limitation, without boundary, unchanging, immutable, without a contrary opposite, infinite, incomprehensible, King of kings and Lord of lords, Leader and Guide of all toward his helpful good. This nature of the divinity possesses, then, all these things rightfully, authoritatively, and properly — not from another, but from himself and eternally. From this good Giver are distributed — and have been distributed and given — all gifts and all helps to his creation, suitably and profitably — to spiritual beings, I say, and to corporeal beings — according to the goodness of his will.

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[1] ܣܦܩܘܬܐ for ܣܦܝܩܘܬܐ.

Now we Christians distinctly confess and glorify, according to the tradition and command of our Lord Jesus Christ, this one worshipful nature of the divinity in a Trinity of names and qnome: of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Although we confess three qnomic names, yet we glorify one divinity in a oneness of nature, in a oneness of power, a oneness of will, and a oneness of authority, with no distinction, no division, and no separation of one from another: one eternal Father of one eternal Son, and one Spirit proceeding from the nature of the Father without division, and both of them[2] in the Father and with the Father eternally. {229} While precedence or sequence are not considered or spoken of here, nevertheless, we faithfully confess and glorify in this way, as we have received, beyond comprehensibility.

If there is one who, because of the incomprehensibility of the divinity and of divine matters, stumbles at this our confession, let him ease his mind with this explanation which we are making before him: as the soul dwells in the body and quickens the body, and (is) in it and with it, and to it belongs the faculty of life and of consciousness, and in part there is distinction and in part there is not, and the soul is not divided from its own faculties, and its faculties are not separated from it, but there is one soul in three faculties, and three natural[3] faculties, and the three-fold natural faculties do not confound the oneness of the soul, and also the explanation of the soul is, for the most part, incomprehensible to us, so much the more we ought not to investigate the Godhead.

If the mind of the searcher is not satisfied with this explanation as well, let a creature, the sun, be another example for him. Although the sun is one in its sphere, in it is heat, and in it is brightness, and while they are distinct from one another and one with one another, one sun is spoken of, and the threeness does not invalidate the oneness, nor again does the oneness confound the threeness, for one sun in three faculties brings about a common benefit unitedly and distinctly. If in created things such matters as these exist, in the greater part of which the assembly[4] is incomprehensible to us, yet in what little of them we do understand there is much gladness of heart for our souls and satisfaction for our mind, and for those things which to us are incomprehensible we are obliged to glorify God, how much more, indeed, ought we to glorify with astonishment the incomprehensibility of the nature of the Godhead? Therefore, although we have been deemed worthy to speak of the little which may be understood, by a bending of the head let us magnify with thanksgiving the great loving-kindness to us, which has also made our poor self worthy of this high honor.

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[1] ܐܚܘܕܐ for ܐܚܘܕܢܐ.

[2] I.e., the Son and the Spirit.

[3] For ܢܦܫܢܝ̈ܐ .

[4] ?ܚܡܝܡܘܬܐ. This word, "heat," seems incomprehensible to me in this context. Mar 'Audo, in his Syriac dictionary, in addition to "the opposite of cold", lists ܟܢܫܐ as a definition. I presume the original intention of the writer to be to convey the idea of composition. Chabot suggests ܚܟܝܡܘܬܐ, "wisdom."

Since your petition of us, my lord, was also about the disputes and dogmas of those speakers of evil, the blasphemers, which touch on the dispensation of our Life-giver and our God, Jesus Christ, concerning which your brotherhood especially asked us to write and inform you, it seemed good to us to write this briefly and concisely. We began somewhat above, and in the same way we write to your brotherhood.

Our good God, eternal, everlasting and without beginning, desiring out of goodness of will to make an open manifestation, brought into being the creation, which utterly had no existence (previously), by the authoritative indication of his will. He created immediately and established authoritatively by the indication of his will the heaven above, I say, and the earth beneath, the two outer limits of creation, the vessel containing all beings, and within these water, air, fire, and darkness, as well as angels who are living, {230} rational, and intelligent, and the spiritual natures continued in darkness through the duration of twelve hours with all the (other) natures which had been created. For the sake of the instruction of the spiritual beings our good God said, "Let there be light,"[1] and immediately, with the sound, the marvelous nature of light came into being. The spiritual natures marveled and were moved to praise of the Creator of light, even as God, prophesying to the righteous Job, said, "When I created the morning stars, all my angels cried aloud and glorified me[2]." In the same way, little by little, God fitted out the unadorned and unorganized creation, which had been fashioned in simplicity, even more marvelously and very wisely, for the sake of the instruction of the rational spiritual beings who had already been created. He (continued to) perform the comely work of creation until the sixth day — not that there was need for this delay, but for the instruction of us rational (creatures) — according to the book of Genesis which God, through Moses, wrote, which he gave for the instruction of the world, (and which is) sufficient for those who attend to it, with which your brotherhood is familiar. And when these natures, which at the beginning were created by his brief gesture and immediately came into being, and again in six days the same were set in order by the command of God for the instruction of rational (creatures), they sufficiently made known, and (continue to) make known, the greatness of the power, the excellency of the wisdom, and the riches of the grace of God. As God commanded, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate between the waters above and below,"[3] and commanded concerning many things such as this, so they came to be according to the authority of his will.

Concerning man alone, the last of all natures, our good God pronounced the marvelous word, showing honor to the contemptibility of our dust before our making, in that he said, "Let us make man in our image according to our likeness,"[4] for at the hearing of this all spiritual natures marveled greatly and were amazed. "What is this which is created, that such as this saying was made concerning it?" And when they saw his body fashioned from the earth, and the soul which was created by the breath of God, and was consubstantial with them in (possessing) life, and with intelligence, reason, immortality, and spiritual existence, and with self-mastery and free will, and (that) he was consubstantial with them in his soul, and consubstantial with all corporeal (creatures) in his body, in whom was marvelously bound up and assembled the whole creation of spiritual and corporeal beings, and (that) he was established ruler, lord, and king over the earth, and that they, the spiritual beings, were ordained for the ministry of all helpful and profitable (things) for men, they even more marveled at the wisdom of God, and they rejoiced in the honor of his image because of its affinity with them.

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[1] Gen. 1:3.

[2] This is a reference to Job 38:7. The Pšiṭta text reads: "(Who) created together the morning stars, and all the companies of angels shouted aloud?": ܟܘ̈ܟܒܝ ܠܨܦܪܐ? ܟܠܗܘܢ ܓܕ̈ܝ ܡܠܐܟ̈ܐ ܝܒܒܘ? ܒܪܐ ܐܟܚܕܐ. The text of Sunhados, as it is quoted above, reads: ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܠܐܟ̈ܝ ܫܒܚܘܢܝ ܘܟܕ ܒܪܐ ܗܘܝܬ ܠܗ ܟܘܟ̈ܒܝ ܨܦܪܐ: ܫܒܚܘ.

[3] Cf. Gen. 1:6.

[4] Gen. 1:26.

But because there were some of them who were moved to the contrary by jealousy and wickedness, and were turned aside to be cast down and to fall into the abyss of haughtiness and hatred for men, when our good God saw these things, he degraded (them) from their honor {231} and cast (them) down from their dominion — that is to say, the Adversary who was appointed over the dominion of the air, and all his cohorts — and they have remained driven from before his face and alienated from their honor from that time until now, as well as from attendance upon God and the honored title of angelhood. They inherited chastisement and the title of satanhood, and of demons and devils, and became diligent — and (remain) diligent — in the deception of men, that they might cast them down into the abyss of their wickedness through disobedience to God, as they did to the first humans, the common ancestors, Adam and Eve, who through the craftiness of their wickedness, were condemned through a transgression of the command of God.

And because it was impossible that fullness of knowledge should come to created (beings) who had suddenly come into existence without instruction, and it was no simple matter[1] for the feeble in knowledge to understand and accept teaching without gradual testing, change, and demonstrations, our compassionate God, for the sake of the teaching of rational (beings), spiritual and corporeal, who are angels and men, wisely[2] fashioned and established this multi-faceted, multifarious world, full of tests and constant in contradiction and adversity, in which the self-mastery and free will of all rational and intelligent (beings) might be tested and made known. In generation after generation he gave the world helpful laws, that by them we might duly show the proof, quality, and diligence of our will, so that by obedience to our Creator and Benefactor we might reveal our will by way of our mind, and it might be clearly shown that we are masters of our will by the choice which is pleasing to us — both we and the angels. While our good God added for those obedient to him his laws as well as good rewards, he restrained fearfully those disobedient to him by the retribution of his justice: in the case of the spiritual natures, on the one hand, by degradation from honor and the overthrow of dominion; and in our case, on the other hand, by death, the instructor of our childish heart, in that it pleased him to establish us mortal first of all, all this most helpfully[3].

As a result of this inclination and freedom of will, then, which he gave to us and to intelligent and spiritual natures there multiplied in us men much error, an intensifying of offenses, numberless sins and impieties, frequent defilements, alienation from God, obedience to demons, the service of idols, and a multitude of injustices and corruptions of all sorts. And with all this multitude of debts and the strengthening of the wickedness and impiety of men — this which multiplied in us also through the deception and operation of demons and rebellious devils — even so our good God did not remove from us the care of his mercies which it was necessary to manifest toward the race of men, but in generation after generation, through the righteous of old and elect prophets, from Moses until the epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ, he revealed and showed to men the way of life which leads to the knowledge of God and the fear of his name. Thus, according to times, {232} conditions, and the ability of the recipients, he made known to men that from their own race he was going to raise up for them a Savior in whom the divinity (would) dwell and in whom he (would) perfect the renewal of the whole world of spiritual and corporeal (beings). He indicated this also by the crying out of the blood of Abel, the first-born of the righteous, and by the translation of Enoch, and also by the ascension of Elijah, and also in that he spoke by the mouth of Lamech concerning his son, Noah, "This one shall give us rest" — that is, he will relieve us — "from our employments and labor, and from the earth which the Lord has cursed,"[1] for also the beginning of the blessing is somewhat revealed in Noah, but the perfect fulfillment is revealed in Christ Jesus, whose appearance in the body was descended from Noah, for he was in truth the Rest-giver of all creatures and our Liberator from the cursed earth, and the Rest-giver in delight and heavenly repose of the men and angels who do the will of God. This was indicated as well by the blessings of Noah upon Shem, for he said, "God shall increase Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tent of Shem,"[2] it being clear that these things were fulfilled in Christ our Lord, the body of whose humanity descended from Shem.

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[1] For ܦܫܝܩܘܬܐ.

[2] ?ܚܟܝܡܐ ܝܬ for ܚܟܝܡܐ.

[3] This reads in Syriac: ܡܢ̈ܘܬܐ ܫܦܪ ܠܗ ܕܢܩ̈ܝܡܢ ܡܩܕܡܬ ܗܘܐ ܟܠ ܡܥܕܪܢܐܝܬ ܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܕܐܦ ܐܝܢ.ܐ ܡܢ̈ܘܬܐ is here substituted for ܡܢܘܬܐ, and ܢܩܝܡܢ for ܢܩ̈ܝܡܢ.

And this indication was even more made manifest in Abraham, whom God blessed: "Through your seed all nations shall be blessed,"[3] and "I have appointed you father to the nations."[4] The godly teacher, Paul, interprets this precisely: "God did not say to Abraham 'your seeds,' as if to many, but 'your seed,' as it were to one, who is Jesus Christ,"[5] who in his humanity is called — and is — the Son of David and the son of Abraham. For this reason all nations which have converted to Christianity, and are being converted, call Abraham "father."

Again, Jacob, when blessing his sons, said to Judah, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, or a law-giver from between his thighs[6] until he comes to whom belongs the kingdom, and all the nations shall wait for him."[7] The teacher of the prophets, Moses, said this as well to the Israelite people: "The Lord your God shall raise up a prophet like me from within you,"[8] and, "Anyone who does not listen to the prophet shall perish from his people."[9]

And David, the king and prophet, spoke in the second Psalm concerning the revelation of Christ and his birth, and that dominion is given to his humanity for his inheritance — all nations — and that he chastises the rebellious with a rod of iron, and that he breaks them to pieces by the resurrection from the dead, as a potter the potter's vessels which he puts in the furnace, and that he urges all nations to embrace the Lordship of the Son so that the Lord, his Father, may not become angry, and that those perish who do not hope in him, and that blessed are those who trust in him.[10] Again, in the forty-fifth Psalm, "Fairer in his appearance than men," and "Mercies have been poured out {233} upon your lips," and "God has blessed you for ever," and "Place the sword upon your loins, O mighty one,"[11] and "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of your adversaries, and the nations shall fall beneath you[12]," and "God anoints you with the oil of gladness above your fellows"[13] — saying these things concerning his humanity. And as one who also knows the God who is hidden in him, he says, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever."[14] Another Psalm, the one hundred tenth, also in the name of God: "The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand'"[15] — it being evident that this honor of sitting at the right hand he bestows upon the nature of his humanity. To the nature to which he says, "You are dust and you shall return to dust,"[1] he says, "Sit at my right hand," because he speaks concerning the origin of Christ in the body, the birth of whose humanity was, through the glorious power of the Holy Spirit, from the womb of the holy Virgin without the seed of a man. But in his divinity he preceded the creation of light and all creatures, for he says, "Before" — before the morning star — "you," who were revealed in "a child", already "I had begotten you[2]." The blessed David said these things and many (others) such as these.

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[1] Gen. 5:29.
[2] Gen. 9:27.
[3] Gen. 22:18.
[4] Gen. 17:5.
[5] Gal. 3:16.
[6] ܚܠܨ̈ܬܐ. Pšiṭṭa reads ܪ̈ܓܠܘܗ, "feet".
[7] Cf. Gen. 49:10. The word "kingdom" appears in some Syr. manuscripts.
[8] Deut. 18:15; cf. Acts 3:22.
[9] Cf. Acts 3:23.
[10] Cf. Ps. 2.
[11] Cf. Ps. 45:2.
[12] Cf. Ps. 45:5.
[13] Ps. 45:7.
[14] Ps. 45:6.
[15] Ps. 110:1.

Again, Isaiah the prophet proclaimed ages before that his humanity would be born from the Virgin daughter of David, but also that he is Emmanuel,[3] and that he is God, the Mighty One of the ages, and Prince of Peace[4], and that his kingdom has no end[5], and that he is the Messenger of the great mind of his Father[6]. Through the spirit he predicted (these things) and many others such as these, which clearly show forth his humanity and also indicate his divinity.

So the other prophets, one of whom said, "Also you, Bethlehem of Judah, you are not the least of the kings of Judah, for from you shall issue a king who shall shepherd my people Israel." He points out these things, on the one hand, concerning his humanity; but again, concerning his divinity, "His going out is from the beginning, from eternal days."[7]

Another prophet says, "The Sun of Righteousness has arisen[8] upon you who know[9] my name, and healing (is) upon his tongue,"[10] showing that the sphere of his corporeality sprang forth from our nature and from the house of David, and that he caused the rays of the divinity to shine in the lamps of his members, that is, by the healing of all our diseases, by the quickening of the dead, and by the multitude of helpful things which he uttered by his tongue for the life, salvation, and encouragement of all men and for the renewal of all creatures — with the other prophecies of these prophets and of others of their colleagues, of which, due to the size of the letter, I have written (only) a few passages to you for your remembrance.

Although our very merciful God in many (things) such as these revealed his care for the race of men, teaching and declaring to them the salvation which at last he was prepared to give to them in his Christ, yet the greater part of men, through the deception of abominable demons, remained in sins and unclean, for they were notorious in impiety and were found guilty in a multitude of injustice(s) of all kinds, over whom, because of the increase of sins and impiety, Satan more and more {234} exalted himself. The bonds of death were very powerfully tightened upon them, and they became utterly deprived of the hope of the resurrection and of the quickening of the dead and of the good things to come. The greater part of them became strangers and aliens to the knowledge of piety, and demons and devils rejoiced in our breaking up, fall, and despair. The holy angels greatly mourned and were saddened at our humiliation and shipwreck, and all the world was very needful of the epiphany of the Savior, especially the race of men, that he might free us from the condemnation of sins, might save us from the service and bondage of demons, and might deliver us from the lowliness and humiliation of the corruption of death, and, what is more excellent than all, he might give to the race of men and the order of spiritual beings incorruptible life, and existence[1] and permanence for ever, with a perfection of the knowledge of his divinity, and a constant steadfastness of standing in the praise of his Lordship.

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[1] Gen. 3:19.

[2] ?for ܕܡܢ ܩܕܡ ܘܩܕܡ ܟܘܟܒ ܢܓܗܐ ܠܟ ܕܒܛܠܝܐ ܐܬܓܠܝܬ: ܗܘܐ ܝܠܕܬܟ. Ps. 110:3 (Pšiṭta): "From of old I have begotten you a child"? ܡܢ ܩܕܡ ܠܟ ܛܠܝܐ ܝܠܕܬܟ.

[3] Cf. Is. 7:14.

[4] Cf. Is. 9:6.

[5] Cf. Is. 9:7.

[6] Cf. Is. 9:6.

[7] Mic. 5:2. The Pšiṭta reads: "But you, Bethlehem Ephratha, you who are to be the smallest among the thousands of Judah, from you shall issue a ruler to be over Israel. His going out is from the beginning, from eternal days."

[8] Or, perhaps, "I will make to rise". The Pšiṭta reads "shall rise".

[9] Pšiṭta has "who fear".

[10] Mal. 4:2.

Therefore, that he might give us these things, the Savior of all appeared for our salvation in the last times, according to the predictions of prophecy. And who was sufficient to perfect our salvation if not the Word of God, he who is also our Creator? Through him our salvation was perfected, for very appropriately God the Word, by the will of his Father, for the salvation of us men and for the renewal of all creatures, and that he might turn us from error to the knowledge of his divinity, came willingly, though not departing from the bosom of his Father, and within the womb of the holy Virgin Mary, he fashioned marvelously, beyond the power of nature, him whose descent was from the seed of David and Abraham according to the prediction of prophecy, a body in which there was an intelligent soul, dwelling in it, uniting it with himself in one union of his own Sonship. For although the body and soul was consubstantial with us in its capacity for perception and knowledge, yet in the union with God the Word its Taker, who united it with himself, that through it he might reveal his hiddenness, and in it [might show forth] the greatness of the power of his divinity for our salvation and for the renewal of all, we confess and say that he is one Son in his divinity and in his humanity. Even though he is two natures — God in nature and qnoma and man in nature and qnoma — yet we confess and glorify one Son of God, now and at his coming again and for ever. When we say "Anointed"[2] — man who was anointed by Godhead, and divinity which anointed humanity, according to the prediction of the prophecy of the blessed David, "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows"[3] — it is not as (in the case of) those who were anointed with the blessed oil, for the humanity of Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, as it is well written. And although we also confess and believe that Christ is God, yet indeed, when we name "God", it is not, by any means, "Christ" we are defining, for the Father {235} is God but is not "Christ", and the Holy Spirit is God but is not "Christ", and although we see and know the man Christ, yet we also believe in and confess that he is God because of God the Word, who took him to himself and joined him with himself in an inseparable union, and made him his dwelling place for ever.

Your brotherhood should know that these things which I am writing to you are not the inventions of Nestorius or Theodore, the blessed (ones), who are reviled and gratuitously accused by the multitude of the unjust, and many of the simple and ignorant stumble at the mention of their names, but (are) from those things which the life-giving mouth of Christ declares concerning himself, and his holy apostles, through the Holy Spirit, say concerning him, from which I also briefly write to your brotherhood:

Christ our Lord calls himself the "Son of Man" in all his Gospel, as he says, "The son of man will be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will mock him and crucify him, and the third day he will rise."[4] Again, he calls himself a "man"[5]: "Why do you wish to kill a man who tells you the truth?"[6] But not only in the contemptible (things) which he accepted for our salvation does he call himself "Son of Man", but also in the glorious (things) of his Godhead. When he revealed concerning himself he said the same thing to his disciples: "There are some who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man in his glory,"[1] speaking about the marvelous transfiguration which he showed in his person on Mount Tabor. Again, in another place: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all his holy angels with him,"[2] speaking about his last coming, which is in glory and majesty, when his humanity will shine with the glorious brightness of his Godhead. But he also says that he is God and the Son of God: "I and my Father are one,"[3] and "Whoever sees me sees the Father."[4] However, in the nature of his divinity neither he nor his Father is seen. Again he said, "Whoever does not believe in the Son does not believe in the Father who sent him."[5] And again, Christ, when he rebuked the Jews who stumbled at him and said, "You blaspheme, calling yourself the Son of God,"[6] with many (other things) also said this: "My Father is working until now: I too am working. Even if you do not believe me, believe the works."[7] And "As the Father raises up the dead and quickens them, so too the Son quickens those whom he chooses."[8] Again he says, "My Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you,"[9] and "Glorify me with you, O my Father, with the glory which I had with you before the world came to be."[10]

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[1] ܗܘܝܐ for ܗܘܒܐ.

[2] ܡܫܝܚܐ.

[3] Ps. 45:7.

[4] Cf. Mt. 17:23; 20:19.

[5] ܠܓܒܪܐ.

[6] Cf. Jn. 7:19; 8:40.

{236} Again, concerning the union of his two natures he said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple and the third day I will raise it up."[11] The Evangelist interpreted (this), saying, "But Jesus spoke concerning the temple of his body."[12] And "this temple" and "I", what does it signify if not the two qnomic natures, a temple composed of body and soul, which is visible and perishable, and God, who is invisible, who raises up his own temple, for the confirmation of hope and the salvation of all men? See how this was understood in words concerning the union of his divinity and humanity in one Sonship. Again in deeds the same union he perfected and revealed in an ineffable wonder when, with the saliva from his mouth which he spat upon the earth, and the dust which was mixed with the saliva, which became mud, taking the mud from the earth with his holy finger and rubbing it upon the face of the man blind from the womb of his mother, he immediately bestowed eyesight, showing himself by this to be the Fashioner[13] of man[14]. It is clear that the saliva which was cast out of the mouth was moisture which is generated by bodies, and a finger, which is composed of bones, flesh, tendons, veins, and skin, it is clear, belong to human nature. But who gave the light if not he by whom all natures were established, that is, the divine nature which was veiled in a body? Thus he who questioned the kinsmen and neighbors of Lazarus about his burial, and in sorrow for his beloved shed tears from his eyes, it is clear, was a human nature. Again, he who with fleshly lips and tongue commanded authoritatively that Lazarus, dead for four days, who already stank, "Come out!"[15], and though his hands and feet were bound in grave-cloths, he went out of the grave and appeared to his neighbors, and also commanded those who had bound Lazarus in grave-cloths, "Loose him and let (him) go,"[16] was clearly divine nature.

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[1] Cf. Mt. 16:28.
[2] Mt. 25:31.
[3] Jn. 10:30.
[4] Jn. 14:9.
[5] Cf. Jn. 5:23.
[6] Cf. Jn. 19:7.
[7] Jn. 5:17; 10:38.
[8] Jn. 5:21.
[9] Jn. 17:1.
[10] Jn. 17:5.
[11] Jn. 2:19.
[12] Jn. 2:21.
[13] ܓܒܘܠܐ for ܓܒܘ ܠܗܕܐ.
[14] Cf. Jn. 9.
[15] Jn. 11:43.
[16] Jn. 11:44.

Consider well, O our brother, that not only with words, but also with these two miracles which he performed, he revealed one unity of Sonship in two natures; and let your brotherhood remember that (when) our Lord appeared upon Mount Tabor, he showed the form of his assumed humanity, which was naturally and qnomically the exact likeness of a man, (but) the eyes of his disciples were not able to observe the splendor of the light of this qnoma of his appearance, when it was clothed with the dazzling glory of his Godhead. In the same way the sun would be eclipsed by the brilliance of rays which shone upon his body, even more than the obscuring of the stars when the rays of the sun are shed upon them. His divinity was not changed or limited, nor did it destroy his humanity, nor, on the other hand, was his humanity absorbed into his divinity, but {237} what was assumed of our humanity remained in the union with his divinity, that his divinity might be revealed in our humanity, and our salvation might be perfected by his divinity, and the contemptibility of our low estate might be exalted to the high rank of his Godhead, according to his eternal grace.

And who among bodily or spiritual beings is sufficient to bring to effect all this greatness of grace if not God our Creator, who became incarnate in a nature from us and was revealed among us for our salvation? And in what was it right for divinity to be revealed if not in the nature of our humanity, which was fashioned in the image and likeness of God at the beginning, which is the bond of all creation, and is assembled from spiritual and bodily (elements) in its soul and in its body? And how is it possible for our condemnation to acquire justification if Christ is not consubstantial with us in his humanity, who through the readiness of his will and through the separateness of his life-style and through the operation of God in him was free of all sin. According to the prophecy made concerning him, "He committed no wickedness, and sin was not found on his lips,"[1] who perfected and fulfilled all the commandments of God without omission, by whose victory we were set free from debt, and by whose righteousness we were acquitted of sin. If he is not true man, who was it that entered the contest with Satan and in three struggles conquered Satan by the power of God which was in him? For someone to venture to say these things specifically concerning this matter is a blasphemy that is the madness of the Manicheans! For God would never be weakened or defeated by Satan. If Christ is not truly man, and in his humanity (did not) accept death for us while being innocent of sin, and God in him (did not) raise him up, we are sinners[2] and condemned to death. We have no hope of gaining the resurrection of the dead, for if, according to the wickedness of speech of the blasphemous, God died and (then) rose, only God and the innocent like him are worthy of the resurrection, and the confirmation of the resurrection is for those consubstantial with him alone, not for our condemned and mortal nature. By this not only do they cut off our hope of the resurrection of the dead, but also they remove from spiritual beings their hope of renewal and immutability, which in Christ our Lord they, as well as we, receive. Inasmuch as they accept things such as these, they are in truth fallen away from two things: to them God the Word is not truly consubstantial with his Father[3], and they no longer truly possess the hope of the salvation with the community of Christians, which Christ confirmed for us in the First-fruits which he took from our nature and united to himself for eternal glory, and it is right to reckon them without hope, like the demons, and without God, like the pagans, or scorners[4] of the divinity, like the Jews.

For this reason we are very properly obliged to confess and glorify God on account of the greatness of his grace and the abundance of mercies which he poured out upon us through his dispensation, full of life, which he perfected for our salvation, and {238} we ought to be truly separated and alienated from all who blaspheme the Godhead (with) variation, change, limitation, composition, or suffering, and from those also who, concerning the incarnation of our Lord, do not confess a true and exact nature of man, which he took as the holy First-fruits of our nature and united to himself in a union without change, and from those again who say that the First-fruits taken from us for union with God the Word, because of the vastness and infinitude of divinity, was swallowed up and vanished in the divinity. We ought in justice to avoid the wickedness of blasphemies such as these, and it is just that those blasphemers should be ashamed of themselves and of the reproof of the apostles as well, who knew, confessed, and believed in Christ our Lord in his manifestation in a true human body, and taught that true God dwells in it, who united its humanity with his own Godhead in an inseparable union. They spoke of him as one Christ and one Son of God in both of his natures, and spoke of and taught concerning Christ, who is man anointed by God, (his) birth, growth, eating, drinking, thirst, and fatigue from the labor of the road, and suffering, blows, scourgings, and crucifixion, the fixing[1] of hands and feet with nails, the opening of the side with a spear, and death, and (these are) not concerning the Godhead.

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[1] Cf. Isa. 53:9; 1 Pet. 2:22.

[2] ܚܛܝ̈ܐ for ܚܛܝܐ.

[3] For ܕܠܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܐܒܘܗܝ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ.

[4] ܡܒܣܪ̈ܝܢ for ܡܒܣܪ̈ܝܢ.

Bring to your remembrance, O our brother, the beginning of the account of the blessed Matthew, the beginning of whose Gospel (is) "The record of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham."[2] It further says, "The birth of Jesus Christ was in this manner,"[3] and again, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah,"[4] and Jesus went, and Jesus came, and slept, awoke, hungered, thirsted, became weary, was captured, and suffered, and all the weaknesses which the Son of God endured for our salvation, which he ascribes to the name of Jesus and to his humanity, while he knows and testifies that he is the Son of God, and that as God he raises the dead, cleanses lepers, opens blind (eyes), drives out demons, and heals by the power of his Godhead all infirmities and sicknesses. And as the glorious, eternal King, the Lord of heaven and of earth, he hands over the keys of his kingdom to Simon, the head of his disciples, whom he names Peter, and empowers him to bind and to loose on earth and in heaven, and after the ascension of his bodily nature to heaven he remains in his divinity with his Church on earth, even until the end of the world. These things, and things such as these, Matthew knows and teaches.

Again, the blessed Mark, although he declares at the beginning of his narrative, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,"[5] yet all the lower things he ascribes to his humanity, and the glorious things alone to his divinity, adding one thing which differs from his colleagues: when his disciples asked Jesus to reveal the time and day of the end of the world, he said to them, "No one knows the hour, neither {239} the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."[6] How can one say that the Determiner of time does not discern the times which his wisdom decreed? But our Lord said it that he might mitigate the importuning of his disciples, and that they might not lose heart, for although he knew, because these things were nothing in his eyes he did not reveal it to them.

In the same way again the learned among writers, Luke the Evangelist (spoke) not only concerning his birth and wrapping in swaddling-clothes, and that he was brought to the temple, and that Jesus the infant was taken up in arms by the hands of the aged Simon, and he babbled over him as over babies and offered supplication to him as to God, for the Son of God was both a visible child and God hidden in the child, but also Luke spoke thus concerning the genuineness of his humanity: "Jesus grew in his stature, in his wisdom, and in grace toward God and men"[1] — "his stature" speaking of the nature of his body, and "his wisdom" concerning the knowledge of his soul, and "grace" concerning the manifestation of divine power in him — along with many sayings without number, of which the writings of the saints are full.

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[1] ܣܘܟܟܐ for ܣܘܒܟܐ.

[2] Mt. 1:1.

[3] Mt. 1:18.

[4] Mt. 2:1.

[5] Mk. 1:1.

[6] Mk. 13:32. Some authorities include "nor the Son" in Mt. 24:36, but the Pšiṭta does not. Therefore Mark's version is singular.

Again, the discourse of the apostle, the theologian John, beloved of his Lord more than the rest of his companions, makes known sufficiently that Christ is truly God, not only by the miracles which he performed in the casting-out of demons, the quickening of the dead, the giving of light to the blind, the cleansing of lepers, and the healing of all the diseases which were brought to him, but also that Christ is, in his divinity, true God in a complete qnoma from true God, for he says at the beginning of his discourse, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, [and] the Word was [God]. The same was in the beginning with God"[2] — these (concerning) the eternity of the being of the Word. But concerning the greatness of his power and authority what does he say? "Everything came to be through him, and nothing which was made was made without him"[3] — that is creatures. And because "life" (itself) is more precious than any creatures, and more than all rational life, the Evangelist says, "In him was life, and this life is the light of men"[4] and of all rational (beings). And although he is the Life-giver and Enlightener of all intelligent (beings), and he who is limitless in his nature was in the world, yet "he came to his own" through his frequent revelations, but "his own did not receive him."[5] Not even when he was revealed more gloriously in the body of his humanity did all those for whose salvation he came receive him — not Satan and the rebellious devils, nor wicked men of the same mind as demons, for the greater part of the Jews and the rest of the erring peoples are alienated in their will from the delight of the light of his knowledge. However, "Those who received him," says {240} the Evangelist, "he gave the power to become the sons of God, those who are born neither from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of a man, but from God."[6] [He did] these things to our nature by his grace that he might lift us up to the name of "sonship" of his Father, and that, though we are bodily beings and mortals, he might establish us as children of God and "gods". "And the Word became flesh" because he took our flesh, "and dwelt among us,"[7] because of the flesh which he took from us and united to himself and indwelt. It is said, "he became flesh," (that) he might give us from the font of Baptism the grace of the earnest of his Spirit, that by it we might be called, named, and become "children of God." And as our nature is not expanded or changed into the nature of the divinity because we are "called" children of God — though in truth we are going to abound in incorruptible, immutable glory in eternal life — but our nature remains within its limits, just so, the Word was not changed from his nature because it is said that he "became flesh," but he "took" flesh from us to his union, in that he bestowed upon us the earnest of his Spirit and united us to himself. These things the Evangelist said, and if, O blasphemers against God, (you think that) because he became flesh, (it was) by a change of the divinity, know[8] that Christ our Lord also "became a curse for us,"[9] says the godly apostle, because he took all our sin — because of which we were cursed — and nailed it to his cross, becoming for us a curse. (Do you think) that God the Word was changed into the nature of a curse? [Some] venture blasphemies such as these[10]! But your brotherhood should confirm his hope in the truth of divine teaching, that God the Word took the holy

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[1] Lk. 2:52.
[2] Jn. 1:1-2.
[3] Jn. 1:3.
[4] Jn. 1:4.
[5] Jn. 1:11.
[6] Cf. Jn. 1:12-13.
[7] Jn. 1:14.
[8] The "blasphemers against God" now are addressed in the singular!
[9] Cf. Gal. 1:13.
[10] For ܡܡܪܚܝܢ [ܐܢܫܐ] ܥܠ ܓܘܕܦܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ.

First-fruits of our nature, an animated and intelligent body, and united it to his parṣopa, that he might be — and be called — man, and might perfect our salvation and the renewal of those above and below, and might bring us from the low estate of our humiliation to the high estate of the degrees of his Godhead.

These things of the Evangelists, then, the godly Paul, the great proclaimer of our Lord Jesus Christ and measuring-rod of Christianity, also teaches, describing the doctrine of believers in this way: "Consider this in yourselves, namely that also Jesus Christ, who, though he was the form of God, took the form of a servant and became in the form of men."[1] If the form of God is nature and qnoma, it is also clear that the form of man is nature and qnoma — two qnomic natures in one Christ, one Son of God. Again he says, "This is the faithful word which we proclaim: if you confess with your mouth our Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead you shall live, for the heart which believes in him is justified, and the mouth which confesses him is saved."[2]

The holy writings of the Evangelists {241} and apostles, and those of the prophets, are full of these (things), and many (things) beyond number, which make known precisely that, as Christ was truly[3] consubstantial with us in his humanity, so he was truly consubstantial with God the Father in his divinity — two true qnomic natures in one Christ, the Son of God.

Let me present you with the example of an earthly king: while he is corporeal, finite, and corruptible, (yet) when he is in the vestment of his kingdom and in his crown, and in all the things with which his dignity is crowned and adorned, he is not reckoned as "plural kings." Just so, neither is the Son of God, because of the human vestment which he is wearing to conceal within it the brightness of his eternal divinity, considered two-fold or manifold, but one Son is confessed in his divinity and in his humanity. While a distinction of natures is preserved, yet he is one Son. If anyone should venture to stretch out his hand against the vestment of the king and tear it, although the insult of the action affronts the honor of the king, nothing in this harms the body of the king. How much more is it improper to say that God suffered naturally because of the suffering which adhered to the body, kindred with us, which was united to God. Those who say, then, that God was born from Mary in an ordinary way, or that God grew up, or that God ate, or that God drank, or that God slept, or that God hungered and thirsted, or that God suffered, or that God was crucified and died, are far from orthodoxy, [and from] the truth of the faith, and from a fitting confession of God. They are truly deprived of the discernment of reason. They dare to presume something which even demons do not venture to speak. But all these things are truly said of the economy which God the Word in his inhomination brought to pass under the name of Christ and Son, for both of these names rightly bring forth an indication of both natures — of divinity and humanity. For example, a certain man, when he is born, is said to be born a "man." He is not called by his soul, which is the honorable part, the upholder of the man, nor is he again called by his body alone, but by the common name of the two parts. Again, if harm should happen to one of the members of the body — in the eye or hand or foot or in whatever member — no one ventures to ascribe this to the soul, but to the body, or to the name "man," and men understand intellectually what injury by nature happens to the body and what to the soul. How much more is it proper to confess that of the entire economy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he brought to pass for our salvation, one thing is suitable to his divinity and another to his humanity, while we also confess and say this: from the annunciation of the angel, {242} who announced to the holy Virgin, saying, "Peace to you, O full of grace," and "you are blessed among women," and "our Lord is with you,"[4] and "you shall conceive and bear a son by the Holy Spirit and by the power of the Highest which comes and dwells upon you," and "he who is born from you is holy," and "he will be called the Son of the Highest,"[1] his humanity which was fashioned in the womb of the holy Virgin Mary was united to the divinity inseparably in one parṣopa of Sonship from the beginning of (its) creation and for ever, while the Word of God remained with the human qnoma, infinitely and inseparably, through all the dispensation — in the birth, in the growing, in the sufferings, and in the death — and the divinity was with the body in the tomb and with the soul in Paradise, but without limitation, and we confess one Son of God in both natures.

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[1] Cf. Phil. 2:5-7.

[2] Rom. 10:9-10.

[3] ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ for ܫܪܝܪܐ.

[4] Lk. 1:28.

And the holy fathers, the patriarchs and bishops who were in the Roman state also taught these same (things). A sampling of demonstrations from one or two of the writings of the renowned and celebrated among them we place here in this letter for the recollection of your brotherhood.

The holy Ignatius, then, who served the see of Antioch in the second place after the blessed Peter, and because of his witness on behalf of the truth was sent to Rome and there was thrown to the beasts, spoke in this manner: "Everyone who does not confess the duality of the natures of Christ, and does not say that as he was God in nature, so also was he man in nature, is a stranger to the truth."

Again, "Those who say that the divinity which was revealed was without a body, shall (also) be without a body like the demons."

Again he testified, "But even now I know Christ in heaven in a body."

And the great Athanasius, who was bishop of Alexandria, said, "Then confess Christ in his divinity, consubstantial with his Father, who is called "man" in his humanity, as one who rightly sets forth two natures in Christ — that of God the Word, without beginning like his Father, whose humanity received a beginning in the womb of the holy Virgin. He performed signs as God, and accepted suffering and death as man, for the two natures are distinct in one Christ, the Son of God. When we worship the Godhead of Christ in his humanity, we do not venture to say to him, 'Let us worship you stripped of the vestment of our humanity with which you were clothed for our salvation.'"

Again, Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, when interpreting the saying which the apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews — "He who is sanctified[2] and those who are sanctified are all from one" — said, "Does not also the Scripture teach you that divinity has no need for sanctifying, but only flesh?"

Again, yet more plainly {243} he says, "We confess with Peter one Christ, the Son of the living God, true God from true God, without beginning like his Father, who at the end of times took from the holy Virgin a body and a rational soul, and the Holy Spirit formed and fashioned it, and he who was the Word dwelt in it in a union without separation."

And Gregory the Theologian says, "It was the Feast of the Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter, a winter without faith, and Jesus was present — God and Temple, God above times, the new Temple which was visible in its nature, and was destroyed, and in a space of three days was raised up, and God who is invisible raised up his own Temple."

Again he says, "He who began, grew up, and advanced is God, although by way of a gradual revelation it is said this way."

Again he says, "On the one hand two natures, God and man, but not two Sons, for (there is) also body and soul."

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[1] Lk. 1:31-32,35.

[2] ܡܩܕܫ. The Pšiṭta (Heb. 2:11) reads ܡܩܕܫ. The passive verb in this case fits his subsequent argument, that is, that the flesh of Christ was in need of sanctification.

Again, the holy Amphilochus, the bishop of Iconium, says, "Therefore, the glorious and excellent things of the dispensation of our Lord Jesus Christ [belong] to his Godhead, and the humiliation and contempt of sufferings to his humanity, as both natures are our one Lord, Jesus Christ, the holy Son of the God."

Again, John Chrysostom speaks in this way: "Now what sort of Sheol has belched forth those who do not confess our Lord Jesus Christ, such as was truly God in nature, who say 'one nature after the union, for the natures which resulted in the union came and were mingled?' Which of the natures, then, do they do away with? The one which is divine? They are deprived of salvation! Or perhaps the one which is human? They are without the hope of life!"

And employing censure he decrees, "Those who say these things are strangers to Christ."

On the one hand, we have set down for your brotherhood these few things, a little in brief from the discourse of some of the holy fathers, the great teachers and pillars of Christianity.

But also Cyril, the troubler of the churches and the corrupter of the truth of the confession of Christians in the land of the Romans, being constrained by the truth, spoke in this way: "While on the one hand the natures which came to the union are different, on the other hand the union preserves the natures of the one Christ, the Son of God, without change and without confusion."

Again, he says in another place, "Let the ark which God commanded Moses to make be an example for you of the union of the two natures of Christ: let the wood that will not rot be for you in the place of the human qnoma which committed no iniquity, and {244} in which no sin was found, and the gold with which the ark was plaited outside and inside in the place of the divine qnoma, which was united and joined to the humanity outside and inside. As there are two natures in one ark, so there are two natures in one Christ, the Son of God."

These (things) and many (things) such as these Cyril, the troubler of the habitable world, said and wrote in his books.

And that I might not stretch out the letter with the weight of many things, among these brief demonstrations I have also written and made known to you a sampling from the holy prophets and blessed apostles, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who spoke concerning himself, as well as such things again which are from the illustrious athletes, our blessed fathers, which we have briefly brought forward for a small listing from the writings of some of them, with a portion, again, of such things as are from Cyril, the scandalizer of many, who also was constrained by dint of the power of God to witness to the truth, although he was in opposition to the truth, all of which show the two natures of Christ, which are preserved without change in one union, and confess one Christ, the Son of God, that you may be strengthened all the more, and your mind may be established in the truth of the confession of Christians, and (that) you might utterly avoid the wicked speech of the blasphemers, who introduce suffering into the divinity, denying the humanity which was taken from us and cutting off our hope of salvation.

Your brotherhood should know that our true faith which we hold we do not hold without investigation, or senselessly, or without thought, but as our Lord spoke and taught us: "Search the Scriptures, for in them you hope to have eternal life, and they witness to me."[1] Again, the godly Paul teaches, "Investigate everything and retain the excellent, and flee from every evil thing."[2] Therefore, we knowingly hold the faith, insofar as is possible, which (is) according to great Rome and all Italy, as well as Constantinople, Jerusalem, and all the renowned cities and catholic churches of the cities of the Romans which are not defiled by the foul filth which the heretics shed from the fount of their hearts by the speech of their lips, but we hold the truth of the confession of the two natures in their properties and in their operation in the one union of Christ. However, the catholic church in this dominion of the East, that is, of the region of Persia and its neighboring regions, holds this more splendidly, accurately, and clearly, and according to the tradition of the holy apostles, and utterly without corruption.

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[1] Jn. 5:39.

[2] 1 Thes. 5:21.

Behold, I have written briefly for your brotherhood's recollection: we did this by writing in the Persian tongue, which is easier for you, so that when it is read in your presence you may understand it. Therefore, it should be read before you {245} many times until you comprehend and understand. And you must seek an answer for every doubt which is engendered in your mind from no other place, but from the holy Gospel, and from the writing of the blessed Paul, and the Acts of the apostles, and the rest of all the writings of the Torah and of the prophets, which also were written through the Spirit of God, and from them receive the resolution of your uncertainty. And may God, who is able to make every grace abound in those who fear him, establish your mind in the truth of his correct faith, (that) you may glorify him for his dispensation which he perfected for our salvation. May he make your soul to shine with desire for his love, and assist you to do his will all the days of your life. Be firm and pray for me. Grace be with all of us, amen.

The letter of Giwargis the catholicos patriarch is ended.

(THE SYNOD OF MAR ḤNANIŠO‘ 776 AD)

Again, the synod of Mar Ḥnanišo‘,[1] the catholicos patriarch, and the agreement which he made — he and all the bishops of the East and the teachers along with the faithful — that the bishop of Kaškar is the first of all the bishops of the East, which they confirmed with synodical arguments.

In the year one thousand eighty seven of the Greeks, which is the one hundred fifty-ninth year of the Ishmaelites, according to their reckoning, I Ḥnanišo‘, servant and minister of the catholic Church of the East, and we, the bishops, declare that when the catholic Church of the East, after the departure of Ya‘qob her patriarch, was left a widow and desolate for the duration of nine years, (being) without a head and leader, until she was despoiled by wolves, Jews and pagans defiled the habitation of the saints, and they mocked (her) and took up habitation in her, and she became a market-place for traders and pagans. Her property and lands which were a support of the blind and the lame and the poor were perverted and became an aid to the impure and those whose who devise abominable lusts, and each of us turned to his own way. But God moved in the heart of a certain hermit, Giwargis of Zawiteh, from the land of Kaškar, and he was moved with zeal for these matters, in accordance with law and nature, and through the assistance of the grace of the Spirit he approached the victorious king, the God-loving Mohammed, emir of the faithful, and he besought and supplicated him to give orders to gather all {246} the fathers in order to elect a patriarch according to the order and custom from of old. The God-loving king, through the power of God, answered his petition, saying, "Because you have been zealous for your people, I order you to be made head and leader." Then this man, chaste and zealous for the Church, excused himself from this and let all these things be for the time being, and being anxious for a council of the fathers, according to the custom and order which continues in the Church, he was sent to 'Isḥaq, the bishop of Urek and Kaškar, who was head of the bishops of the chief province of the East, and he came with the fathers, the metropolitans and bishops, and they gathered in the royal city, which is the city of peace, Baghdad.

Then the God-loving king commanded his chief officer, who was called Moḥziz bar 'Abraham, to be judge and overseer of the (purpose) for which they had gathered. This commanding officer, when he learned that the bishop of Kaškar was the head and caretaker of the council of the fathers and the election of the patriarch, sent to bring him in before him, and said to him, "The God-loving king desires that this man, who is zealous for your people, should become your catholicos." Then the bishop, in accord with Scriptural command, "Every soul should submit to the sovereign authority,"[2] and, "He who rises up against authority rises up against the command of God,"[3] and because he could not find accusations against this man, or a complaint worthy of rejection, and also some citizens and Kaškarites and others with them were pleased with him, and in addition the prince did not want to bring into the Church a heresy or division, he gave this answer to the commanding officer: "I agree to the command of the king and his choice, in accordance with the ordinance (governing) rulers and subjects."

However, I, Ḥnanišo‘, with all the fathers, the metropolitans and bishops with me, through our own voluntary action, did not agree to this, for we considered it the introduction of a novelty. Desiring to establish our own rectitude, through devices and stratagems we concocted this (scheme) without the agreement of 'Isḥaq, the bishop of Kaškar, and in concealment from him. I was chosen in an election — I, Ḥnanišo', who was bishop of Lašom. But between the negative[1] and affirmative[2] of these matters the contradiction[3] of 'Isḥaq, the bishop of Kaškar, and of his diocese was introduced, which separated out the truth from falsehood. They put together the premise from the Sunhados and from nature and wove together syllogisms, and they sought redress (for) the wrong done to them through this election, making known, through disputation with us, that: "The Holy Spirit decreed the bishop of Urek and Kaškar (to be) the first-born[4] and head. Because of this it was not just or proper for the patriarch to be confirmed without his agreement and consecration, for it is impossible for one to be called {247} ['father'] whom the 'first-born' has not brought forth[5], in that it is impossible for there to be 'children' without a first-born, nor can there be a father without children — for the children of the Church are the members of Christ, he who is trustworthy and does no iniquity, and is righteous and upright, and has no fraudulent or blemished members — those whom on earth the Father and Head has established as his own portion and his own likeness. For Peter was the head of the Twelve, and he who sits upon this catholic throne is Peter inasmuch as he is heir to Peter, and if one who seeks to be Peter wishes to become Peter, he (really) ought to be Peter. For if he who is Peter is not of Peter, he cannot be Peter, for it is written in the Scriptures of the Lord of Peter, 'I am the vine and my father is the vine-dresser,'[6] and again, 'I am the vine and you are the branches. A branch is not able to bear fruit unless it remains in the vine.'[7] Therefore it is clear that Peter is a portion of Christ, as a branch is a portion of a vine, and whoever inherits this throne is Peter and is a portion of Christ in the likeness of Peter, and a portion is not able to be a portion of anything to which it belongs unless it possesses the fullness and disposition of that to which it belongs[8], according to the definition which reason has ordained. For this is the fullness and disposition of one who is Peter's portion: an entity who possesses love, peace, and long-suffering, as well as justice. But here there appears, instead of these things, what is contrary to these things, the absence of love and of the law of justice, for the early fathers, those in whose heritage you glory, did not rashly and vainly establish[9] the bishop of Urek and Kaškar as the head of the bishops of the great province and of all bishops. For Urek is Abraham's city, the father of the nations, as it is written, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to inherit.'[10] Again, Kaškar is the same as Ellasar, which is from ages and generations ago, a kingdom which ruled the land of Shinar, according to the testimony of the son of Amram[11]. Indeed, this same Ellasar, being lifted up in authority and exalted in its free-born children, after the news of Christ shone forth, at the same time apostles were being killed in every place and country, was crowned with all beauties before (any) apostle or a disciple had entered or walked in it, hastening quickly to Baptism and to the worship of Christ, breaking down fashioned gods and abolishing their religions. She obtained the blessing which is written, 'Blessed are those who have not seen me but have believed in me,'[1] while even to this day her children, the fruit which is from her, who are illustrious in all the land and (its) cities in the dignity and holiness and wisdom {248} which flow forth from them, testify to her freedom and the greatness of her blessings. As it is written, 'A good tree is not able to produce bad fruit, nor (is) a bad tree (able) to produce good fruit,'[2] and again, 'By their fruits you shall know them.'[3]

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[1] Ruled 774-778. This is the second Patriarch of this name.

[2] Cf. Rom. 13:1.

[3] Rom. 13:2.

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[1] ܩܛܦܣܝܣ.

[2] ܐܦܘܦܣܝܣ.

[3] ܐܢܛܦܣܝܣ.

[4] ܒܘܟܪܐ.

[5] For ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܡܨܝܐ ܕܬܬܩܪܐ [ܐܒܐ] ܐܝܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܘܠܕ ܒܘܟܪܐ. This argument depends for its persuasiveness on the interconnectedness of Patriarch, Metropolitan of Kaškar, and the rest of the Church. Any break in that three-part structure seems to invalidate the whole.

[6] Cf. Jn. 15:1.

[7] Cf. Jn. 15:5-6.

[8] Somewhat freely for ܐܢ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܩܢܝܐ ܡܠܘܐܐ ܘܢܝܫܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܡܕܡ ܕܡܢܬܗ ܗܝ ܘܡܢܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܨܝܐ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܡܢܬܐ ܕܡܕܡ ܕܐܬܝܗ ܡܢܬܗ:

[9] ܣܡܘ for ܣܡܟ.

[10] Gen. 15:7.

[11] See Gen. 10 for the founding of Nimrod's kingdom in Shinar, including the cities of Babel, Erech, and Accad.

"Behold, we have shown that we are important rulers, not rashly or indiscriminately, but according to the command of the fathers. You do not agree with their synod, nor are you able to be their heirs, for a son is not able to despise what pertains to his father and seize his inheritance, nor is it possible for anyone to alter a boundary which the fathers have established, not even the same fathers who established the boundary, for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who moves the boundary of his neighbor.'[4] Concerning the truth of these things our father, the aged 'Isḥaq, testified to us that when Jacob went in instead of his brother with deceit and received his blessings, and Esau returned from his hunting, prepared meat[5], and demanded the promise, it was said to him by his father, 'Your brother came in deceitfully and received your blessings.'[6] When he retorted and said, 'Is there no blessing left for me?'[7], it was said to him, 'Lo, I have already made him head over you, and also have given him all his brothers as servants. Then what can I do for you, my son?'[8] And lifting up his voice again, he wept. That which he desired he could not receive. But other (things) were added to him: 'You shall live by your sword, and you shall serve your brother. If you turn, his yoke will pass from your neck.'[9] Behold, all these things, which are like us, belong to the headship over brothers. However, not just an inferior headship has been given to us, but even a headship of importance, for it is written in the lines of the synod of the holy fathers, 'The bishop of Kaškar is the archbishop of the great province.' If, then, the Holy Spirit thus granted our holy fathers to set in order the members of Christ in one ecclesiastical body, and to establish the head of our province, greatest among all provinces of the East, in the likeness of the lordly member within a body, and to make the bishop of Kaškar the head of all the bishops of the provinces, then it is clear that all provinces are made subject to the supervision[10] of, and obedience to, this province, as well as their leaders, and they accommodate themselves to it, and submit their authority to its authority. Again, this province looks to and obeys its head, and its government (looks to and obeys) his great and excellent authority, and lo, all the flock is found to be adapted to this head, and the definition of this aptness turns out to be dialectical (in character), in that it is self-convertible by means of the soundness of its arrangement[11]. If a negative decision is made on the part of this head of the lordly portion of the body of the flock in an election[12], where there is an accusation against him who is appointed[1], the whole body is removed from him, and the election is found to be {249} empty and profane according to the law and order of logic, for when it[2] desired to effect the negation of (some) action that has been determined, does it not now negate the entire action fully and completely, seeing that it denies the most important part in (the argument)?

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[1] Cf. Jn 15:29.

[2] Cf. Mt. 7:18.

[3] Mt. 7:20.

[4] Cf. Deut. 27:17.

[5] ?For ܨܒܝܢܐ, i.e., what his father wanted.

[6] Gen. 27:35.

[7] Gen. 27:36.

[8] Cf. Gen. 27:37.

[9] Gen. 27:40.

[10] ?ܣܒܘܪܘܬܐ for ܕܒܘܪܘܬܐ.

[11] ?for ܕܝܠܩܛܝܩܝܐ: ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܗܦܟ ܥܠ ܝܬܗ ܒܝܕ ܫܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܡܛܟܣܘܬܗ
ܘܐܫܬܟܚ ܬܚܘܡܐ ܕܡܠܚܡܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ.

[12] Presumably, in a convocation to elect the Catholicos.

"To speak plainly, now, of the entire excluded matter: if there is no assent of the bishop of Kaškar, who is the head of the bishops of the great province of the provinces of the East, to the election of a patriarch, all assent is removed from the election, and it is found to be vulgar and profane, for it is impossible for the head to be taken away and the body to stay behind, lest it remain in resistance and transgression, and its harmony be disturbed and its life destroyed. The election shall be found dead and useless, for the body without the head is dead, and if dead, all of its deeds are dead. Concerning the orders of the dead, the Raiser of the dead testifies, 'He is not God of the dead, but of the living,'[3] as also David the harpist[4] sings, 'The dead will not glorify the Lord, nor all those who go down into darkness,'[5] and again, 'The dust will not praise you or show your faithfulness.'[6] If, then, as is confirmed through precepts of the law and nature and (by) demonstrations, the bishop of Kaškar is excluded from any election whatsoever, by dint of justice the great province is also excluded with him, for it is firmly fixed to its head, and it is not just for a body to act deceitfully against its head. Again, with the great province all the provinces of the East are excluded as well, for it[7] was ordained their head, and it is not right for the lesser to act wickedly against the greater, or for one to act deceitfully against another, or for one to commit iniquity against another, otherwise harmony will be shattered, and affairs come to an end as well.

"Therefore it is clear that justly and wisely our holy fathers ordered this canon: that the bishop of Kaškar shall be the head and overseer of the council of fathers and of the election of the patriarch, along with all other needed things. There shall not be even one piece of business without him, for justice will not attribute the name of fatherhood to one he does not bring forth, nor the name of leadership to one who has no right. Neither will the Holy Spirit be pleased with one who stretches out his hand and makes a pact against his neighbor. Even as the Spirit gives, he cuts off and rescinds with his double 'amen', for one who does not enter by the door of the sheepfold, but climbs up by some other place, is a thief and a robber[8]."

I, Ḥnanišoʻ, and all the fathers with me signed when this combative counter-argument entered between my affirmation and their negation, revealing the reality of[9] the falsehood, by means of logical premises that come from a categorical statement of our same predications resulting from their same presupposition; and to speak conclusively, the same, not by equivocation, and not with respect to (just) one part or another. In the same manner, what is being predicated is the very same as what is posited by means of dialectical and analytical definitions[10]. They confirmed their justice through demonstrative argumentation, as it is written, "You shall be just in your words and show yourself innocent when you are judged."[1] We gave way to justice and bent our neck to its sweet yoke and to its bonds, and we lent our shoulder and arm to its light burden. We left our gifts upon the altar[2] and traveled the humbling road to reconcile our brothers and our children who retained wrath against us, and though the name "patriarch" and "catholicos" did not belong to me, Ḥnanišo', and this, our election, did not belong to us, the metropolitans and bishops of the provinces of the East and its dioceses, without the agreement of the consecrating bishop of Kaškar, we offered them our verbal petition and begged from them an overlooking of the offense, a loosing of wrath, and an absolute and earnest revocation of condemnation. They, the Christian brothers and children of Baptism, did not turn away from what was right, upon which this foundation was laid, that through a seven-fold[3] cycle, which returns to itself on one column alone from the seven-fold cycle of seven[4], seventy times seventy generations of the world may show forth clearly their love through the oil of forgiveness[5], and very quickly and without delay they loosed the wrath and laid aside the rage, and manifested sweet love, and they quickly confirmed and completed that concerning which all the fathers, the metropolitans and bishops, had agreed, and with them the title of the patriarchate and catholicate is rightfully ours, and they bowed down their shoulder and took up the yoke of our fatherhood and headship as beloved children.

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[1] I presume this means the bishop of Kaškar in his capacity as convener and president over a patriarchal election, though none of this is very clear. I would suspect that this text is badly garbled, and I have strained to make some sense of it. Much revolves around words which have ܙܘܥ as their root and which have a sense of "removal", and for which I have substituted "absence", or some related term. I have also taken some liberty in reconstructing the text.

[2] I.e., the convocation to hold an election.

[3] Mt. 22:32; Mk. 12:27

[4] ܡܬܙܘܕܐ for ܡܬܕܘܙܐ.

[5] Ps. 115:17.

[6] Ps. 30:9.

[7] I.e., the great province.

[8] Jn. 10:1.

[9] Lit., "with the truth of".

[10] This passage, beginning with "when this combative counter-argument", as it stands seems to defy meaningful translation.

Now I, Ḥnanišo', catholicos patriarch of the East, to whom until now, as I previously said, this great and exalted name did not rightly belong, with all the fathers, the metropolitans and bishops of the provinces of the East and of their dioceses, have written this book and placed in it this decree with canons of anathema, that none of the fathers, the metropolitans, bishops, and religious — or the faithful — is allowed, by the living "Word of God," by which the heaven and earth and all their host were made, and (which) holds the height and the depth, to transgress or alter the decrees which the holy fathers have established through their synodical writings {251} concerning the headship of the bishop of Urek and of Kaškar, in any way or sense, neither in his sitting nor his rising, neither in giving nor taking an accounting of the great house of the fathers in the cities[6], nor to consider an election without him. Speaking together, we have placed under anathema anyone who presumes against him wickedly outside of the limits and order and rank which our ancestral fathers have confirmed, approved, and given to him, for he is truly the head of the bishops of the great province, and he is the first-born and head and first of all the bishops of the East. Concerning this we have appended a reproduction of their words against us because of our dispute in this book, that anyone who comes across this same book may understand that we did not write this agreement rashly or with respect of persons, but confirmed the rank which our ancestral fathers defined for him.

We too, the men of Kaškar — since through the humbling of our father, Mar Ḥnanišo' the catholicos patriarch, and of our holy fathers, the metropolitans and bishops, we have accepted and acquired the debt due to this city — because this conclusion was not arrived at during the life of our venerable father, Mar 'Isḥaq, the bishop of Kaškar, for he had departed to his Lord before these consented to (matters), have made agreement and confirmed this decree: if — God forbid! — anyone of us strives against the headship of our venerable father, Mar Ḥnanišo', catholicos patriarch of the East, or utters the arguments of troublesome heresies, we shall avoid and abstain from contact with him, and we will accept any deposition which comes upon him from the presence of our father, Mar Patriarch, and that of all the holy fathers, the metropolitans and bishops, and we will condemn him in his guilt.

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[1] Rom. 3:4. Cf. Ps. 51:4.
[2] Mt. 5:23-24.
[3] ܫܒܝܥܝܬܐ for ܫܒܝܥܝܐ.

[4] An allusion to the planetary orbits?
[5] Cf. Mt. 18:22.
[6] I.e., in Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

I, Ḥnanišo‘, catholicos patriarch, have signed, sealed, and confirmed this writing and this agreement, as well as we, all of us metropolitans and bishops in all lands and cities of all the East, while gathered in the patriarchal see, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Again, we have decreed that no one is allowed to loose and abrogate any of these (things) above (written) which have been ordered according to truth and justice by the will of the Holy Spirit and with the mediation and undertaking of all of us, by the "Word of the omnipotent Lord," on whose will the heaven and the earth depend. Amen.

The synod of Mar Ḥnanišo‘ the catholicos is ended.

{252} The writing of the book of the synodical councils of the East, which took place at various times, being in number thirteen, is ended.

First: Mar 'Isḥaq the catholicos.
Second: Mar Yahbalaha the catholicos.
Third: Mar Dadišo‘ the catholicos.
Fourth: Mar 'Aqaq the catholicos.
Fifth: Mar Babai the catholicos.
Sixth: Mar 'Aba the catholicos.
Seventh: Mar Yausep the catholicos.
Eighth: Mar Ḥazqiel the catholicos.
Ninth: Mar Išo‘yahb the catholicos.
Tenth: Mar Sabrišo‘ the catholicos.
Eleventh: Mar Grigor the catholicos.
Twelfth: Mar Giwargis the catholicos.
Thirteenth: Mar Ḥnanisho' the catholicos.

(Appendix: the Synod of Barṣauma)[1]

{525} The Letters of Barṣauma

The First Letter

Barṣauma, Yoḥanan, Ma'na, 'Abdišo', Paula, Noḥ, 'Abraham, Barṣauma, 'Eliya, 'Aba, Šem'on, 'Eliya, and 'Isḥaq, to the excellent (ones), Mihrnarsa[2], Šem'on, Muše, Yazdgard, and Daniyel the bishops: hearty greetings in our Lord.

After I had confirmed the judgment with our father, Mar 'Aqaq the patriarch, again, {526} in the month of 'Ab in the second year of Balash[3], the King of Kings, through the encouragement of God, the Lord of all, who delights in the tranquillity of his church and the peace of his people, the holy and Christ-loving Mar 'Aqaq, bishop catholicos, came to Ḥdayab, as well as the bishops with him, and we and the bishops with us came together, and we received one another lovingly and kindly, and in the perfect and true peace which came about we participated with one another in the precious bequest of fellowship in the Mysteries of Christ. The scroll which we composed in Beit Huzaye, which had in it disagreements, accusations, headings, charges, and evidence against the blessed Babwai the catholicos, we utterly, fully, and completely loosed and made void, and we hold and embrace the holy Mar 'Aqaq, bishop and catholicos, among the teachers, fathers, and ministers. We make known these things to your love so that you may know to manifest love and obedience to the venerable and holy 'Aqaq the catholicos. Also, (this) seemed good to us and was generally agreeable to all of us, and with the acknowledgment which is owed to your undertaking, you will be honored by us and receive a good reward from God. Be strong in our Lord at all times.

Second Letter:

Barṣauma to the venerable and God-loving Mar 'Aqaq, patriarch, your friend sends greetings in our Lord.

We dwell in a land which is considered "enviable" by those who have not known it (by experience), one in which the opponents of its tranquillity are multiplied, and the hindrances to its prosperity are innumerable. But especially at this time, for the second year — one after another — we have been smitten by drought and a scarcity of necessities. Hordes of southern tribes have assembled in it, and by their multitude and that of their livestock they have ravaged and laid waste the towns of the plains and mountains, and attempted to plunder and take captives from both populace and property from the land of the Romans. A great host of Romans, along with their subject Arabs, gathered and came to the border and sought to take vengeance for that which the Ṭu'aye, servants of the Persians, did in their land. But the glorious and illustrious marzban[4], Qardag Nakorgan, gently and artfully hindered them from this, making a compact with them to gather the chiefs of the Ṭu'aye and take from them the plunder and captives, while the Roman Arabs (would) also bring the property and men which had been removed by them at various times from Beit Garmai, Ḥdayab, and Nineveh, returning these (things) to the Romans and these to the Persians, and to set boundaries and {527) (make) a negotiated settlement, that wicked things such as these should never again take place. God knows when there will be a conclusion to these (matters) which are mentioned above, concerning which and because of which the King of Kings commanded that the king of the Arabs and the marzban of Beit 'Aramaye should come here. But the head of the Romans, their soldiers, and their Arabs all remain at the border. However, we, for the greater tranquillity and for a sign of great friendship, at the beginning of 'Ab[1] persuaded the prefect, and he entered and came to Nisibis, to the marzban, and was received by him with great honor. While they were together eating and drinking in happiness, the Ṭu'aye made bold to go, with four hundred horsemen[2], and fall upon the lower villages of the Romans. When this was reported it brought great grief to both sides, the Romans and the Persians, and the prefect and the rulers with him were indignant with us, and it seemed to them that this took place through our perfidy so that there might be dishonor to the Romans who had entered Nisibis. Therefore, concerning our coming there, which your excellency wrote (to me), it would be impossible at this time until all disputes which now exist between the Romans and the Persians are resolved. When the marzban heard of the edict of the king and of your letter, he too could not at all endure the word, and if your wisdom (can) hear us, neither did I trouble the other bishops (to go) there at this hour when hunger holds sway everywhere, and want in every land, that murmuring and resentment might not multiply against you. Instead, this council which you are prepared to convoke should be reserved to a time after your coming and going with the ambassadors to the land of the Romans. In the same way, the trustworthy doctrine which was wrought in the council of separation[3] will be pleasing to your understanding when you have seen and learned of the confusion which Satan has stirred up in the land of the Romans. However, if by all means you resolved that this (council) should take place shortly, I (will) agree in word and deed to everything which you do in your council which is in accord with the laws of Christ, but to come there now is impossible because of the trouble between the borders. We have loosed and annulled completely by our letters the synod of Beit Lapaṭ, and from now on are disciples and subjects at all times of the see of your fatherhood. Be strong in our Lord, and pray for us.

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[1] These letters should be compared with the Synod of Mar 'Aqaq and the "Synod" of Bar Ṣauma attached to it, as well as with the following Synod of Mar Babai.

[2] ܡܗܪ ܢܪܣܐ for ܡܗܝܪ ܢܪܣܐ.

[3] ܘܐܠܫ for ܐܘܠܫ. Balash's second year would be 485.

[4] I.e., an office like unto that of a duke or marquis.

Third Letter

Barṣauma to the venerable God-loving Mar 'Aqaq the patriarch, your friend sends greetings in our Lord.

With supplications your disciple, subject, {528} and bond-slave of the greatness of your priesthood, the miserable Barṣauma, in need of the compassionate succor of your priesthood, offers petition to your mercifulness, O venerable and holy father of fathers, Mar 'Aqaq, archbishop patriarch. Hearty greetings in our Lord.

I point out to your mercifulness, O merciful father, that our nature, because of its passibility and mortality, is also prone (to evil), and at the time that Satan caused strife between me and Mar Babwai, I went up and arrived at the provocation of all the bishops who were acting foolishly, and (when) he desired to bring judgment among them, they rebelled against him and came to me, and with many counsels they advised me that I and they should do things which are foreign to the conduct of Christianity and also to the government of the dominion in which we live. Indeed we also gathered and convened a synod in the city of Beit Lapaṭ and through human passion laid down canons in the time of Mar Babwai — may God pardon and forgive the offenses of the whole community! In truth I bear witness that the council which we convened, and whatever was done in it, was contrary to Christianity. After awhile I was accused by my conscience, for although nothing which we did either stood or stands, yet it is incumbent upon us during our life to offer repentance and perform a loosing and annulment of what has been done by us, that there may be no one after us who is allowed to take an action by those canons, and that there may be a loosing and anathematizing of everything done there. I have written to you letters of loosing and annulment of the rebellious synod, which was contrary to the paternal synods, twice before this letter, and as I live, even if your fatherhood should depart from the labor of this world to arrive at the rest where all the souls of all the fathers dwell, should my humble (self) still be found in this temporal life, I will remain the disciple and subject of him whom grace calls after you, for I have learned from things which have befallen me that whenever Nisibis is not subject to the leader who occupies the see of the holy church of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, ruin and great misery take place in the eastern region. At this time Nisibis is troubled, disturbed, and turbulent as the troubled sea, and if a letter of anathema from your fatherhood does not come quickly and pacify the city, I will not be left in the episcopacy of Nisibis, nor will Nisibis be left in subjection to the great kingdom of the Persians, for there are rebels, and if they are left in Nisibis, they will destroy themselves and also destroy the land in which they dwell. Again, they also imparted to me a rebellious mind during the time that we were in opposition to the see of your fatherhood — and contrary to both, as I indicated above[1]. And the marzban here is helping these {529} rebels, for he is not aware of their evil intention, but if I make known to him their mind and he learns their secret, I am afraid lest he write to the king and inform him of the rebelliousness of these perverse fellows, (in which case the king) may issue a command against all Christians because of the rebelliousness of these men. But as far as possible the word should be concealed and not reach outsiders, and by your great and divine dominion you must write a letter of anathema authoritatively, chastening them as a physician who operates upon an ill (man) that he may raise him up from his affliction, while also frightening them with writs, that if they do not come to their senses you will report (it) to the king and to his rulers. Let these few (things) which have been inscribed by our humble (self) for the loftiness of your knowledge suffice. May we be remembered in your prayers night and day, O our excellent father and elect of God. Also, remember this wretched land continually, that it may find salvation through the assistance of your prayers.

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[1] August.

[2] ܦܪ̈ܫܝܢ for ܦܪ̈ ܫܝܢ.

[3] ? for ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܕܦܘܪܫܢܐ. The sense is unclear here. This could mean "the council of discernment".

Fourth Letter

Barṣauma to our excellent, holy, and Christ-loving father, 'Aqaq, bishop and catholicos, your friend sends greetings in our Lord.

The letter which your holiness sent to us in love we have received and read, and we have understood all that was written in it. We too are resolved that in all our days those things which are helpful to the faithful and are useful for piety shall be provided by us, and (that) we do not become an occasion for this primacy which has been granted you to come to an end profitlessly. Again, this too seemed good to you, that at this time you should make correction of the confusions and tumults which disquiet us — the controversies in the churches of various places among the faithful. But the glorious and illustrious Qardag Nakorgan, the marzban, when he received the edict which was sent from the merciful King of Kings concerning us, because of many matters which were taking place here at the borders between the Romans and the Persians, such things as especially required our presence and continuance, took our copy to the palace of the King of Kings, and made known that some rulers of the Romans were sent to the border and were negotiating for a peace settlement between the borders, and the bishop of Nisibis is expert in these matters of borders, and his presence is greatly required. Unless the negotiations have been resolved it will be impossible for him to come to the palace. We also made known these things clearly in a letter, that because of the negotiations we are not able to come to the court of the King of

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[1] I.e., both the see of Seleucia and the Persian government.

Kings at this time, and now too, as we wrote in our previous letter, {530} we now declare the same, that in all (matters) of your council, and in your meeting with one another, (which) you have done according to the rules of the canons of holy church for the establishment and preservation of the true faith, we also, and the bishops beneath our control, agree to and accept with the good will of the fear of God. Everything, therefore, which you are prepared to do in your council with the help of Christ, begin and do and finish, and do not expect us or the bishops of our province. We and all who are with us greet your holiness and all who are with you. Be strong in our Lord, and pray for us, our father.

The letters are ended.

Again we copy the letter of Barṣauma, metropolitan of Nisibis, to Mar 'Aqaq the catholicos.

Barṣauma, your friend, to my venerable, holy, and God-loving lord, our father, 'Aqaq, bishop and catholicos, greetings in our Lord.

We always make known the agreement of our mind with your fatherhood for the sake of the love of our brothers and the tranquillity of our members, and for the establishment of those things of the Church which are due and proper. Since we, for our part, have desired that all good (things) should be fulfilled by us and through your mediation, (and) since this is not easy for us — that it should be done as we desire, since we do not have the power to move wherever we wish — we ask your holiness that the citizens of the city of our excellent brother and member, Mar Paula the bishop — we are colleagues and associates — should treat him with all gentleness and peace. For, although we have petitioned them in letters, as is right, and have said to him, as is proper, (that) if they choose to accept our petition in writing, and are reconciled with his excellency, and hold him in love and honor as a head, not remembering former (things), "we will applaud your virtue[1] and be grateful to you," but if they remain in hardness and do not obey . . . . . . [(you should set forth) their punishment through suspension, as they deserve,] and we will agree to your judgment which you decree for them, as well as for anyone in such a case. Be strong and pray for us.

Of the same Mar Barṣauma to Mar 'Aqaq, catholicos patriarch.

To the venerable, holy, and Christ-loving Mar 'Aqaq, bishop patriarch, your friend Barṣauma sends greetings in our Lord.

When we sent agreement to all that you are doing, the God-loving beloved brother and fellow-minister of the community, Mar Ma'na the bishop, spoke to me concerning the great undertaking {531} which your holiness is making for the sake of the establishment of the correct faith, and concerning the expenses you are incurring for the sake of the church's profit, and (so) I sent by the hand of the holy Mar Ma'na a hundred darics. If the matter for which the adversaries are preparing for a decision should continue and not be determined, we (shall) set apart and send for the expenses of your holiness yearly 50 darics. Let your holiness therefore accept (them). Pray for us, our father, and do not remember our offenses.

Two letters of Barṣauma to Mar 'Aqaq, catholicos-patriarch of the East, are ended.

I did not find these two letters in the volume from which we copied the four previous letters which are inscribed above.

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[1] ? ܡܝܬܪܘܬܟܘܢ for ܡܬܪܘܬܟܘܢ.

(APPENDIX TO THE SYNOD OF MAR 'ABA I)

{540} Second: [concerning] orthodoxy toward the faith.

'Aba, [catholicos] patriarch of the East, to the presbyters, deacons, and all the ranks of the religious, with all the orders of faithful laymen in Dorana[1] 'Ašga . . . . . . 'Aprahaṭ, and in Dorana Rayag, villages of [the land] of Šuš, the capital of Beit Huzaye, greetings in our Lord Jesus [Christ], our Hope and our Boast.

As in this [month] of Prior Tešri, of the mild, merciful, and well-[doing], the preserved in the dominion of his kingdom [in health] of body and joy of soul, with a [good] will and merciful intention, Kosrau, the King of Kings, sheltered by divine grace, after [we had turned back] from Fars with our brothers, the metropolitans and bishops, and had made corrections in various lands, various cities, and [various] towns of those things which were confused and in need [of] correction, it was reported concerning you in the city of Beit [Lapaṭ] by the God-loving Mar [Kosrau] that you do not show him obedience [as] to your head and leader . . . . . . to the true faith: therefore . . . . . . your life, and we came to you, to the town . . ., we, and also the God-loving [Mar] Paulos the bishop metropolitan, Mar Šlemon, Mar Mihrnarsa[2], Mar [Šila], Mar 'Eliša', Mar Šem'on, Mar 'Abraham, and Mar Kosrau, the bishops with us. {541} [We instructed you in many things from the divine Scriptures, and we enlightened you from them concerning the correct confession, saying:

We believe in one] eternal God who has no beginning or end, and there was no time when he did not exist, but he exists eternally and continues always. Death or change in any way never has power or mastery over him, or is in him or has been in him. He alone is unfashioned and uncreated, Maker and Creator of all beings and natures. He alone has no need or lack — the Satisfier of all our needs. [He it is who by his will holds all, governs all, and administers all. He is the Giver] of both Testaments, the Old and the New, and there is no God other than he. He is the First and he is the Last. He is the All-knowing and the Giver of wisdom. He it is who was proclaimed to the ancients by the prophets in a unity of nature in manifold and sundry (ways), and in the last days spoke to us in his Son, whom he appointed Heir to all things, who is Christ our Lord, the same who was born according to the flesh of the holy virgin Mary without the intimacy of a man through the power of the Holy Spirit, as it was told her by the angel Gabriel, "The Holy Spirit shall come and the power of the Highest shall rest upon you."[3] And he — this Son, Christ — was in the world thirty years in order to make restitution for the debts of nature and of Adam, the head of our race, and of the Law of Moses, as the Scripture says, "He was under the Law, and he redeemed us from the curse of the Law"[4] by his perfect righteousness. The same, at the age of thirty years, drew near and was baptized by the blessed John, sanctifying our Baptism by his Baptism, and after he was baptized and had struggled with Satan, and had conquered him during his fast of forty (days) in the wilderness, he chose the holy apostles and worked signs and wonders. And when he had completed on earth the work of the One who sent him, which was his teaching, which he confirmed by various miracles which he performed, he committed the Mystery of his body and blood to his disciples. Then he sealed his dispensation with his suffering and death on the cross, and on the third day he prevailed over death by the power of his divinity, and rose after three days, as he had said to the reprobate Jews, "Destroy this temple and on the third day I will raise it up,"[5] designating the temple of his body, as the Evangelist interprets, [the same] which the Jews destroyed and he rebuilt in immortal and immutable life. And after he rose from the dead he appeared to his disciples and confirmed for them his resurrection, saying, "Touch me and know that a spirit {542} does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."[1] And after forty days he ascended to heaven while his disciples looked upon him, to whom it was said by the angels, "This Jesus whom you have seen ascending to heaven" — as if to say, "such as ascends in his true body," that is, in full humanity — "is going to come in the same way at the end of the world with the glory of his angels to raise the dead and to judge allcreation."[2] As it is written, God is "going to judge the whole earth with justice through the man whom he set apart and to whose faith he turned everyone in that he raised him from the dead."[3] And at the conclusion of the days of Pentecost he sent to his disciples the Holy Spirit from heaven in the likeness of tongues of fire, as he had said to them, "You shall not leave Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high."[4] And after the grace of the Holy Spirit had settled upon the holy apostles, he[5] taught them all truth, as our Lord had said to them, "When the Spirit, the Paraclete, comes upon you, he will teach you all the truth."[6]

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[1] ܕܘܪܢܐ for ܕܘܒܪܐ.

[2] ܡܗܪܢܪܣܐ for ܡܗܪܢܪܫܐ.

[3] Lk. 1:35.
[4] Cf. Gal. 4:4; 3:13.
[5] Jn. 2:19.

And what is the truth that the Holy Spirit taught his disciples if not concerning the Holy Trinity which was hidden from all creatures and was spoken of by way of suggestion in the Old Testament, but in the baptism of our Lord was revealed as in an image in the Son, who was made known in him who was baptized, and (in) the Father who bore witness to him, and in the Holy Spirit, who settled upon him as a dove, the same which is the mystery of the Trinity, of which he spoke to the apostles after his resurrection, "Go and disciple and baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"[7]? These things were made known with precision by the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, who learned from the Holy Spirit that Christ is not ordinary man, nor God stripped of the clothing of humanity in which he was revealed, but Christ is God and man, that is, humanity which is anointed with [the divinity] which anoints it. As it is written, "Therefore God, your God, anoints you with the oil of gladness above your fellows,"[8] the same making known his humanity. Again, "In the beginning was the Word,"[9] this showing his divinity, which exists eternally and for ever, which created all that is seen and all that is unseen, and exists in three qnome, without beginning, without change, without passion, and without division, which are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As our Lord said — for by him the eternal Trinity was made known — as he spoke concerning himself, "Destroy this temple,"[10] that is, the humanity with which he clothed himself, and again said, "My Father, who [dwells] in me, performs these works,"[11] and again concerning the Holy Spirit who is in him when he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because of this he has anointed me."[12] Behold, from the title "Christ" we learned about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we have understood his humanity from the same, and in it is {543} the seal of the entire confession of Christianity. Anyone who does not confess in this way, let him be anathematized. Anyone who introduces a "quaternity" into the holy and immutable Trinity, let him be anathematized. Anyone who does not confess that in the last time the Only-begotten Son of God, who is Christ our Lord, was revealed in the flesh, let him be anathematized. Anyone who does not acknowledge the suffering and death of the humanity of Christ, and the impassibility of his divinity, let him be anathematized. Or anyone who seals a prayer with the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit but numbers some other with them, or does not believe that in the name "Son" he refers to the divinity and humanity of Christ together, or anyone who seals a prayer with the name of Christ and not as confessing the Trinity, let him be anathematized.

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[1] Lk. 24:39.
[2] Cf. Acts 1:11.
[3] Acts 17:31.
[4] Cf. Lk. 24:49.
[5] I.e., the Holy Spirit.
[6] Cf. Jn. 16:13.
[7] Cf. Mt. 28:19.
[8] Ps. 45:7.
[9] Jn. 1:1.
[10] Jn. 2:19.
[11] Jn. 14:10.
[12] Lk. 4:18.

Now take heed to this true faith which we have spoken before you and you have also received, [lest] anyone should lead you astray in any way, so that you turn from this true faith and become alienated from the household of Christ. If you keep [yourselves] in it, may the blessing of Christ the Savior be upon you forever. Be strong!

From the sixth letter, which is fashioned "Praqṭiqa"

Lest the canons, which have been ordained with sweat and many labors, be confused and there be turmoil in the Church, we have decreed and defined — I, 'Aba the patriarch, and we, the metropolitans and bishops — and we have bound and sworn by the power of the Father, who is without beginning, and by the word of his eternal Son, and by the authority of his Holy Spirit, that none of the anathematized and culpable, or wanton after rulership, or lovers of themselves, or lovers of money, or lovers of pleasures rather than the love of God, shall be placed in authority, nor shall they be allowed, after my departure, to occupy my see and to hold and govern the work of the patriarchate. But one should be sent by the bishops of the province of the catholical see, with the agreement of all of them and of the two cities, to the metropolitan of Belapaṭ — if he has been consecrated canonically and with our agreement while we have not yet departed — and after that, Prat dMaišan, and after that, 'Arbil, and after that Karka dBet Slok, and let the four of them come to the cities — or at least three of them — with three bishops each from each one of the four provinces named, {544} and let them choose together, with the agreement of the two cities, one who is free from deceptive appearances and trustworthy to guard the perfect faith, to confess the correct doctrine, to preserve — more than his own life — the ecclesiastical canons, and to govern wisely in all purity and chastity. Let them establish him in the church of Koke, according to the tradition of the holy fathers, and let them seat him upon the catholical throne to supply our office after our departure. And may the mercies of the Holy Trinity, exalted above all, keep him, help him, and strengthen him to stand at the head of the people of Christendom unto the glory of God and of his Christ and of his Holy Spirit. But if after our passing it should be done in some other way than these things which we have spoken, decreed, and defined, may the wrath of God come from heaven upon those who do otherwise and upon all who have participated[1] with them, with the "amen" of all Christendom.

These (things), then, we have admonished and decreed by the "Word of our Lord" to be observed and done after our departure.

Now these (things), and [the (things)] which we wrote prior to these (things), [we are sending] to you, that the command of the Lord, [who saved] his Church by his precious blood . . . . . . the clergy and faithful laymen [of the two] cities, you shall not neglect[2] to command . . . . . . in the matter. The leadership . . . . . . of schools other than as . . . . . . otherwise no one [is allowed, by the "Word] of our Lord," nor any other . . . . . . in the council without our permission . . . . . . confusions among brothers.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be poured out upon all of you. May it keep you with us from all the wiles and harm of the Enemy of our humanity. Pray for the tranquillity of the Church and for the life, sustenance, and protection of the merciful, peaceful, benevolent to everyone, Kosrau, the King of Kings, preserved by divine grace.

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[1] ܡܫܬܘܬܦܝܢ for ܫܬܘܬܦܝܢ.

[2] ܬܫܘܠܘܢ for ܬܫܠܘܢ.

We have composed, sealed, and validated these writings, I, the patriarch, and we, the metropolitans and bishops, as canons and decrees which concern the patriarchate and the metropolitanate, which by the "divine Word" were ordered and established in these writings. May they be observed and fulfilled for ever, and anyone [who is consecrated] other than these ways shall be loosed and removed from his consecration — he and they who consecrated him. [And if,] after my — the patriarch's — departure, another [patriarch] is not established for me as [is set down by us] in these writings, he shall be loosed and removed — he and they who consecrated him. If [he is] not [consecrated] in [the great] church [of Koke, but {545} outside the cathedral,] and by [metropolitans] and bishops who transgress against [these] writings, [and] he is consecrated [other than as we have written,] he shall be loosed and removed [from this great ministry] and from all the ranks of the priesthood — he and they who consecrated him — and they shall be anathematized for ever, by the command of the glorious Trinity [of the Father,] Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

To these writings . . . . . . which is permitted to him . . . . . . of the holy Mar 'Aba the patriarch, Marqos, bishop of Beit Daraye, Mar . . . . . . bishop . . . . . . and Mar 'Aqaq, bishop of Beit Madaye.

Again, the canons which were established by Mar 'Aba the patriarch and the bishops who were gathered with him.

(Some of) these canons are from the synod of the three hundred and eighteen fathers who gathered at Nicea, and others are from the synod which was at Ancyra in Galatia, which is in Cæsarea of Cappadocia[1]; others are from the synod which was in Neocæsarea, others from the synod which was in Gangra, others from the synod which was in Antioch at the dedication of the church, others from the synod of five hundred and sixty seven bishops who gathered in Chalcedon, others from the synod of the East which was in Seleucia and Ctesiphon in the days of Mar 'Isḥaq the catholicos, and others from [the synod] of the holy Mar 'Aba.

First Canon: Those presbyters who are from the villages may not offer the oblation in churches of the cities when the bishop is present or a presbyter of the city, nor give the oblation in the service. But if those belonging to the city are far off and one is alone, he may give it.[2]

{546} Second: If there is a presbyter or a deacon of any church whatsoever, or [one] who is from the clergy of a city, who leaves his place or position and goes to another, or utterly takes his leave, and he should remain continuously[3] in the other place for much [time,] the same shall no more minister his rank. [And especially] if his bishop calls him [and advises] him to return to him and to come (back) to his own place and position, and the same does not submit to [his] advice and remains in disobedience, let him be utterly dismissed and cease from his position and from all his ministry.[4]

Third: That it is not proper for a deacon [to sit in the presence of a presbyter, but he should sit by the command of the presbyter. In like manner there should be honor for the deacons from the sub-deacons and from all the clergy.][5]

[Fourth:] That [it is] not [proper] for a sub-deacon to take the stole for himself as a deacon, or [to leave the doors] of the temple at the hour of the liturgy.[6]

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[1] Sic ms! Evidently corrupt.
[2] Canon 13 of Neocæsaria.
[3] For ܬܗܘܐ ܐܡܝܢܐܝܬ.
[4] Canon 3 of Antioch.
[5] Canon 20 of Laodicea.
[6] Canon 22 of Laodicea.

[**Fifth**: That] sub-deacons are not allowed [to have a place in the diaconion, or to touch the vessels] of the sanctuary.[1]

Sixth: That [it is not proper] for anyone [to perform an exorcism] when he has not received [the faculty] of the bishop, either in a church or in houses.[2]

Seventh: If there is anyone who, on the supposition [of] virtuous [ways], or as a sign of contempt, makes [his fast] on Sunday, let him be anathema.[3]

Eighth: [If there is any] woman who, on the supposition of [virtuous] ways or as a sign of righteousness, should exchange [the garb] of pure clothing [and put on] male clothing, let her be anathematized.[4]

Ninth: If [there is one who condemns] those who eat flesh — except [for that which is sacrificed,] or that which is strangled, or blood — (who are) [innocently] eating according to the faith — and since [because they eat] flesh he considers [them][5] to have no hope before God, [let him be anathematized.][6]

Tenth: That it is not proper for anyone [to receive] a blessing from heretics, [for] their blessing is [a non-blessing] and not a blessing.

{547} **Eleventh**: That it is not proper for anyone to offer [prayer] with heretics in the liturgy, neither in a church, nor in a monastery, [nor outside] a church.[7]

Twelfth: Concerning those [who take women by] violence in the name of marriage, or are [aiders] and abettors of the violent, the holy synod commanded that if they are clergy, [they should be] completely [cast out] of the Church.[8]

Thirteenth: It is not lawful for an [arch]bishop to leave the province [to which he was first] called to go to another, or [a bishop (to leave) a city] to which he was first called to go [to another.] He may not give [the reason] that he did this from his own choice, or because he was compelled by [the people, or] because there was pressure upon him from the bishops, [but let him remain in the church] to which he was first called [by] God, [and not depart from it,] according to this decree which is established now and (was so established) previously.[9]

Fourteenth: Again, this was reported to the great and holy synod: in various places — and in several places in cities — deacons give the sacrament to presbyters, which the canon of the Church never permits, and which is not a custom which comes down by tradition, for how are those who are not allowed to offer the oblation allowed to give to those who offer it? Again, this too was reported to us: some of the deacons touch the Eucharist of the Mysteries before bishops and presbyters. All of these [things], now and hereafter, [shall be removed] from the midst, and the deacons shall remain [in the duties] to which they were appointed and also called. Know that the deacons belong to the bishop and are lower than the presbyters, and they should receive the oblation in their order after the presbyters receive, while a bishop or presbyter should give (it) to them. But also, never again shall a deacon be allowed, without or within, to sit in the midst of the presbyters, for this is disorderly and uncanonical. If anyone does not choose to obey these things after all these warnings and decrees, the same should be expelled from his ministry.[10]

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[1] Canon 21 of Laodicea.

[2] Canon 26 of Laodicea.

[3] Canon 18 of Gangra.

[4] Canon 13 of Gangra.

[5] For ܘܐܝܟ [ܕܡܛܠ ܕܐܟܠܝܢ]: ܢܣܒ ܥܠ [ܐܝܠܝܢ].

[6] Canon 2 of Gangra.

[7] Canon 33 of Laodicea.

[8] Canon 27 of Chalcedon.

[9] Canon 21 of Antioch.

[10] Canon 18 of Nicea.

Fifteenth: Concerning young maidens who are betrothed and afterwards are seized by others: it was decided by the word of us all that they should be given (back) to their previous espoused, even if they are taken from them by force.[1]

{548} Sixteenth: If a woman should marry two brothers she should be cast out until death. However, if in her illness she promises truly, and determines thoroughly in her mind, before the whole Church, (that if) she should recover and arise from her illness, she (will) loose herself from the impure second marriage and come to penance, there shall be mercies for her on the day of her death, and she shall be buried with a service. But if she has recovered, and without her consent, by force, through the violence of her husband, she remains in the second marriage reluctantly and with anguish of heart, the sentences and penance shall be upon her husband and not on her.[2]

Seventeenth: If there is a woman who, because of a supposition of piety, [cuts] her hair, which is given to her by God [for the recollection of subjection, as one] would loose [the command of subjection,] let her be anathematized.[3]

Eighteenth: Hereafter there shall not be two or three bishops in one city, but there shall be one bishop in each city and its jurisdiction. When the bishop of a place arrives at death, the bishop of the place is not allowed to make a bishop in his own stead for the location, either during his life or on the day of his death.[4]

Nineteenth: A bishop who is made by one or by two bishops is invalid. It should only be by many, or, at the very least, by three, even if the bishops are very distant, and these also in the presence of the metropolitan or with the authority of [a letter] of the metropolitan, the head of the bishops.[5]

Twentieth: Concerning eunuchs and the mutilated, according to what was commanded by the holy synod, (so) we observe: any man ——— his nature and damages his member ——— or by outsiders ——— because the canon permits him, and unwillingly he was made a eunuch for such as these (things)[6].

Twenty-first: In the same way too, concerning possessions ——— according to what was commanded by the holy synod, all of us cheerfully observe: every man ——— to our ministry and all contact with us.[7]

[Twenty-second:]

Twenty-third: Concerning auguries, divinations, incantations, knots, {549} charms, magic, and the service of demons, which are all service of the Accuser and strange works of impiety and sin [which are related] to paganism, these all, with anathema and with complete authority, should be wiped out from all our churches and fellow-believers. And whoever is found, etc.[8]

Twenty-fourth: Concerning the ranks of all the clergy, that is, presbyters, deacons, sub-deacons, [and also the keepers of the doors,] we say: when [they are called by] the faithful [to "agapes" and suppers, they should conduct themselves] with their food [respectably and not greedily.] A man some . . . . . . before him as . . . . . . [and] they are [not] allowed to demand [or take from there] portions, either from the rich [or from the poor,] that the name of God and his teaching [might] not [be reviled.] To gather . . . . . . in a lounge, or recline . . . . of such as these in any of the houses . . . . . . or in a tavern. Any of the ranks . . . . . . all of them belonging to the church are utterly not [allowed] — and also may not be allowed — such, but anyone . . . . . . may eat, being held, and a piece . .

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[1] Canon 11 of Ancyra.

[2] Canon 2 of Neocæsarea. 'Aba's canon differs from Neocæsarea in some of its provisions.

[3] Canon 17 of Gangra.

[4] See Mar 'Isḥaq's synod, the prologue to the canons.

[5] Again, see Mar 'Isḥaq in the same place.

[6] Canon 2 of Mar 'Isḥaq.

[7] See canon 4 of 'Isḥaq concerning clergy and impure gains.

[8] Canon 5 of 'Isḥaq.

.... sobriety concerning all their dealings, lest abuse occur and they bring dishonor upon the liberty of the Church.[1]

Twenty-fifth: On every Sunday, etc.[2]

Twenty-sixth: Also a bishop may never enter or cross the boundary of his colleague in a disorderly fashion, [and what to him] is unacceptable in his colleague, he (himself) may not do.[3]

Twenty-seventh: A presbyter and a deacon ——— shall not be accepted.

Twenty-eighth: Every bishop who is [in a city, shall] have one learned [archdeacon] ——— bema [shall proclaim] the litany of the deacons.[4]

[Twenty-ninth:][5]

[Thirty-eighth:] [...... for] the reasons given, is he who also ventures to be joined to his father's wife, or to the wife of his uncle who is the brother of his father, or to the wife of his uncle who is the brother of his mother, or to his aunt who is {550} the sister of his father, or to the wife of his uncle who is the sister of his mother, or to his sister, or to his daughter-in-law, or to the daughter of his son, or to the daughter of his daughter, or to the daughter of the daughter of his wife, like the Magians, or to the wife of his brother like the Jews, or to an unbeliever like the pagans. Concerning these and such as these, we have decreed and defined — we and the metropolitans and bishops with us — that from now on the religious as well as the laymen, men as well as women, all who venture to do this unclean and abominable thing, and all who are assistants and helpers for them, are bound and anathematized in heaven and on earth from entering the Church and from receiving the holy Mysteries and contact with the faithful, and may wrath come upon them from heaven, with the "amen" of all, etc.

Thirty-ninth: It was also said and decreed by the council of all of us bishops that this word shall be observed for ever: whenever a deacon is suspended by a presbyter, or a presbyter is suspended by his visitor, or a visitor by a bishop, or a bishop by a metropolitan, or a metropolitan by the patriarch, even if it is said that he who was suspended was suspended improperly, still the suspension shall be observed carefully. He who is suspended shall remain in his bonds, and he who has been bound may ask for redress from him who bound him in a general council, and when there is an examination in the council their judgment shall be final as a proper mandate.

Fortieth canon: Our interpretation — that of all of us bishops in all the East — of the faith which was set forth by the three hundred and eighteen bishops, which we hold in our confession on our right and on our left, is that which was composed by the holy and God-loving blessed (one), Mar Theodorus, bishop and interpreter of the divine Scriptures.

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[1] This seems to be an expanded version of 'Isḥaq's canon 8.

[2] Canon 9 of 'Isḥaq.

[3] Canon 11 of 'Isḥaq. Also the following canon here reflects the same canon 11 of 'Isḥaq.

[4] Canon 15 of 'Isḥaq.

[5] There is a direct movement from the Twenty-ninth canon to the thirty-eighth in the text.

(APPENDIX: THE "SYNOD" OF 612 AD)

{562} Again, we write the thanksgiving and defense to the king which the fathers, the Persian bishops, offered, along with the fathers and hermits who were gathered with them at the palace in the twenty-third year of Kosrau the king, the son of Hormizd, when Gabril the Drostbid[1] incited the king to summon us to a disputation with his like-minded heretics. {563} Being demanded by the king to show the truth of the faith by a comparison[2] of arguments, valiantly and boldly they fearlessly clarified it.

The thanksgiving and defense to the king:

All of us on all occasions, at all times, every day, at all hours are obliged first to worship and give thanks to our good and merciful God for the best of all his kindnesses toward us, giving to our generation a good lord such as you, illustrious in exploits and overflowing in kindnesses. Secondly, we venerate your glorious lordship and acknowledge your benevolence, which toward us is greater than (toward) all the subjects of your awe-inspiring kingdom. For even though, in the likeness of the sun, which by its light and by its warmth cheers the whole world, your goodness is shed abundantly over all men, yet because everyone is more sensible of his own, and is more able to recognize those things which are done to him, and is also the more obliged to offer gratitude on his own behalf, we, your servants and weak in understanding, are obliged by the greatness of your very wondrous triumphs to betake ourselves in order to take notice of the abundance of your goodness toward us, that we may rejoice in it, be helped by it, and acknowledge it. For when we compare ourselves with all men from Adam to the latest man, we see that we are blessed, for we have been deemed worthy to live under the dominion of your awe-inspiring kingdom. Not only does your merciful lordship provide for us continually with all good (things), in visible things and bodily life, but in your condescension you have been pleased to concern yourself diligently, in your ineffable love of your servants, with our spiritual life as well, which is the true faith, which was given in mercies to the race of men. For this new and marvelous gift we require new wisdom, that by it we may be able to acknowledge the goodness of your mercifulness as is proper. Whatever we are lacking in this, we will place our hope in our God, the God of all, whom we supplicate and from whose omnipotent Lordship we make our request, that he strengthen the throne of your kingdom through the extension of your dominion over all the ends of the earth, as well as all the generations of the world. Amen.

Because we have been commanded by the gentleness of your dominion to make known before you the truth of our faith, O more illustrious than all kings, victorious Kosrau, the King of Kings, in confidence upon the living God, the Life-giver of all, bowing to your command full of benefits, we set down briefly the truth of our faith in a definitive statement {564} which we have learned correctly from the proclamation of the prophets and apostles of our Savior. This eastern region, more honored than all regions, received it from the blessed apostle 'Adai, one of the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, and has retained it and preserved it without change until now, and it is this:

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[1] A title indicating his status as a doctor.

[2] ܦܚܡܐ for ܦܚܡܝܐ.

A copy of the faith which was written by the fathers, the bishops who gathered at the palace in the twenty-third year of Kosrau, the King of Kings, the son of Hormizd, which the King of Kings required of them. And they wrote and showed the truth of their faith.

We believe in one divine nature who is eternally without beginning, living and all life-giving, powerful and Creator of all powers, wise and Giver of all wisdom, simple Spirit, infinite and intangible, uncompounded and without parts, incorporeal, invisible, immutable, impassible, and immortal, into whom suffering and change are unable to enter — either in his own essence, or in another, or with another. He is perfect in his being and in all that belongs to him, and is unable to receive increase or decrease, for he alone is self-existent and God over all, who is known and confessed in three holy qnome — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — tri-qnomic nature essentially: (three) qnome of a single eternal nature — among whom there is no distinction at all except for the distinguishing features of their qnome: Fatherhood, Sonship, and Procession. In everything else that the nature is acknowledged (to possess) in common, likewise each one of the qnome is confessed (to possess) individually and also itself is, without decrease. Inasmuch as the Father is impassible and immutable, (so) also the Son and Spirit are acknowledged to be without passion and without change with him and like him. And as the Father is believed (to be) infinite and without parts, so also the Son and the Spirit are acknowledged to be without limit and without composition — three qnome, perfect in everything, in one divinity, in one power which cannot grow weak, one knowledge which cannot fail, one will which cannot turn aside, one dominion which cannot be destroyed, who created the world in his grace and governs it by the indication of his will, who, though from the beginning he in a limited way instructed the race of men in the knowledge of his Godhead according to the measure of the magnitude of its understanding, and in the intervening time, through various visions {565} and in varied forms, he was revealed to the saints, and through manifold laws he informed and instructed men according to the growth of their understanding, (yet) at the end of times it pleased his incomprehensible wisdom to reveal and make known to rational (beings) the marvelous mysteries of his glorious Trinity, and to raise to honor our nature and to sow in it the trustworthy seed of resurrection from the dead and new and incorruptible life which would never receive change according to his eternal foreknowledge and will.

Therefore, for us men and for our salvation the Son of God, the Word, while not departing from the presence of his Begetter, came to the world and was in the world, and the world through him was made. And because created natures were not able to see the glorious nature of his divinity, from the nature of the house of Adam he fashioned for himself wonderfully a holy temple — a perfect man — from the blessed virgin Mary, who was brought to completion without the participtíon of a man in the natural order, and assumed it[1] and united it to himself and in it was revealed to the world, according to the saying of the angel to the mother of our Savior — "The Holy Spirit will come, and the power of the Highest will rest upon you. Because of this, he who will be born from you is holy and shall be called the Son of God"[2] — concerning the marvelous conjunction and inseparable union which from the beginning of its fashioning the human nature which was taken had with God the Word, its Taker, teaching us that from that time we know one parṣopa in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten before the ages without beginning from the Father in the nature of his divinity, and born in the last (time) from the holy Virgin daughter of David in the nature of his humanity, as God promised beforehand to the blessed David, "From the fruit of your belly I will seat upon your throne."[3] The blessed Paul interpreted the promise after the events had taken place, saying to the Jews concerning David, "From the seed of this (man) God raised up, as he promised, Jesus the Savior."[1] Again, he wrote to the Philippians in this way, "Consider this in yourselves, namely that also Jesus Christ, who, being in the form of God, took the form of a servant."[2] Whom else does he call the form of God if not Christ in the nature of his divinity? Again, whom does he name the form of man if not Christ in his humanity? Of the one (nature), he says, "it took," but (of) the other, "it was taken." [Well then,] it is impossible to confuse the properties of the natures, for it is not possible for him who took to be the taken, or what was taken to be the Taker. For God the Word was found to be revealed in the man whom he assumed, and his human nature (was found) to appear to creation in the order of his humanity, in an inseparable union, one Son of God, as we have learned and maintain. {566} But it is impossible for divinity to be changed into humanity, or humanity to be transformed into the nature of divinity, for it is not for the Self-existent to fall under the necessity of change and of passion. For if divinity is changed, it is no longer a revelation but a corruption of divinity. Again, if humanity departs from its nature there is no longer the salvation but the obliteration of humanity.

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[1] Because of subsequent statements I take the antecedent to be "temple".

[2] Lk. 1:35.

[3] Ps. 132:11.

Concerning this, we believe in our hearts and confess with our lips one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose divinity does not disappear, and whose humanity is not stolen away, but who is complete God and complete man. When we say of Christ "complete God" we are not naming the Trinity, but one of the qnome of the Trinity, God the Word. Again, when we call Christ "complete man" it is not all men we are naming, but the one qnoma which was specifically taken for our salvation into union with the Word. Because of this, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was begotten in his divinity from his Father eternally, was born in the last times for our sake from the holy Virgin in his humanity. Though in his divinity he remained without need, without passion, and without change, in his humanity, after his birth, he was also circumcised and grew up, according to the witness of Luke the Evangelist: "Jesus grew in his stature, and in wisdom and grace toward God and men."[3] He kept the Law and was baptized in the Jordan by John, and then began to proclaim the new covenant. While by the power of his divinity he worked wonders — the cleansing of lepers, the opening of blind (eyes), the expulsion of demons, the raising of the dead — yet in the nature of his humanity he thirsted, hungered, ate, drank, became weary, and slept. Last of all (these) things, for our sake he delivered himself over and was crucified, suffered, and died, though his divinity did not depart from him, nor did it suffer. His body was wrapped in a linen cloth and placed in a tomb, and after three days he rose by the power of his divinity, as he had said beforehand to the Jews, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."[4] The Evangelist interprets (this), saying, "But he spoke concerning the temple of his body."[5] And after he rose he went about on the earth with his disciples (for) forty days, showing them his hands and his feet, saying, "Touch me and know that a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see that I have,"[6] that by word and by deed he might assure them concerning his resurrection, and by the trustworthiness of as he had said beforehand to the Jews, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."[7] The Evangelist interprets (this), saying, "But he spoke concerning the temple of his body."[8] And after he rose he went about on the earth with his disciples (for) forty days, showing them his hands and his feet, saying, "Touch me and know that a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see that I have,"[9] that by word and by deed he might assure them concerning his resurrection, and by the trustworthiness of his resurrection he might confirm in us the hope of our resurrection. And after forty days he ascended to heaven in the sight of his disciples, while they were looking at him, and a cloud received him and he was hidden from their eyes, according to the witness of Scripture. And we confess that he is going to come from heaven with the power and glory of his angels and bring about resurrection for all the race of men, and judgment and trial {567} for all rational (beings), as the angels said to the apostles at the moment of his ascension, "This Jesus who is taken up from you to heaven shall so come as you have seen him ascending to heaven."[1] By this they clearly taught us that also (in) this the qnoma of his humanity was taken up to heaven, and was not destroyed or changed, but was preserved in an inseparable union with his Godhead in the exalted glory in which he is going to behold, in his final revelation from heaven, the shame of his crucifiers, and the rejoicing and boast of his faithful, to whom, and to whose Father, and to the Holy Spirit (belong) glory and honor for ever.

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[1] Cf. Acts 13:23.
[2] Cf. Phil. 2:5-6.
[3] Lk. 2:52.
[4] Jn. 2:19.
[5] Jn. 2:21.
[6] Lk. 24:39.
[7] Jn. 2:19.
[8] Jn. 2:21.
[9] Lk. 24:39.

We cherish within our mind and confess with our lips this orthodox faith which We have accepted and learned from the spiritual teaching of the prophets, apostles, and holy fathers. All those who have proclaimed and taught (it), and have agreed with and accepted it, whether general councils which took place at various times in the West and in the East, or whether individual persons whose names are renowned in the holy Church, such we accept and cherish and honor as fathers, brothers, and children of the faith. But those who turn aside from this standard of the faith, and have learned and taught contrary to these, we consider reprobates and strangers.

This is the teaching of the correct faith which was committed to the catholic Church by the holy apostles, and in the land of the Persians, from the days of the apostles until now, there has not appeared any heretic who has introduced schisms and divisions into this faith. But in the land of the Romans, from the days of the apostles until now, there have been many and various heresies and they have polluted many, and when they have been banished from there, their darkness has then come in flight from there to here. As the Manicheans and Marcionites, so also are these Theopaschite Severans, with their corrupt confession. Though their sickness began there, when they were cast out of holy Church and driven away, they then left and came here, going about covertly in false garb, in concealed corners with rustic men, ill-informed men. But now we hope and expect that, as the land of the Romans has been subjected to the exalted jurisdiction of your awe-inspiring kingdom, in a new and marvelous-in-its-fashion dominion of lands and cities, so your lordship may make corrections through the power of your profitable command, and our people may be confirmed in this apostolic faith, which together we have received from the beginning, of one true God who is Lord of all natures, that he may keep you according to his will in unity of lordship over all the world for ever and ever. Amen.

{568} Their petition, which the fathers presented to the king, that he might make [a head] for them in the East.

While we petition your mercifulness that as at all times the abundance of your kindness toward us has been apparent, more than all the kings before you, as also, whenever it was necessary that a head be made for us — not because we were worthy, but because of your mercifulness — you, without our petition, used to command that there should be a head for us, so too now, seeing that, because of our unworthiness, your care has been taken away from us, and we have not now had a head for many years, and there have been many injuries in the Church, if it seems good to you in the kindness of your will, do not look upon our unworthiness, but according to your accustomed mercifulness, command a head for us, and without limit we will be grateful to your glorious lordship.

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[1] Acts 1:11.

The difficult questions of the orthodox against the Theopaschite Severans:

1. Against those who confess one nature or qnoma in Christ[1].

2. This one nature and one qnoma which you confess in Christ, is it consubtantial with God the Father, or consubtantial with the blessed Mary? If consubtantial with the Father, it is simple and infinite spirit, and nothing was taken from Mary. If it is consubtantial with Mary it is ordinary man. But if it is consubtantial with the Father and consubtantial with Mary, as the Father and Mary are two natures, so also Christ is two natures.

3. If you confess one nature and one qnoma of divinity and humanity in Christ, of necessity parts of this nature and qnoma are divinity and humanity. Since the whole is greater than the parts, and a part is less than the whole, then this nature is greater than each one of its parts, and the divinity, in its "partness", is less than this nature of which it is a part. It is impossible that there should be anything greater than divinity!

{569} 4. If an assembled and compounded nature is different from an unassembled and uncompounded nature, (and) the nature of the Father and of the Spirit is unassembled and uncompounded, but the nature or qnoma of Christ is assembled and compounded from divinity and humanity, then the qnoma and nature of the Son is different from the nature of the Father and Spirit.

5. If Christ in his divinity is the Creator of his humanity, then in his humanity he is made by his divinity, but it is impossible for one qnoma (both) to make himself and be made by himself, how is Christ one qnoma?

6. Was Christ made, and did he become one nature or one qnoma, or was there one previously? For anything existing, which first "begins" to be, as time follows its beginning, so a "made thing" (follows) its "becoming". If God the Word was "made" one nature or one qnoma with his body, he left his uncreated nature and had a Creator. But if the nature or qnoma which is established by the union did not exist before the union — (yet) the nature or qnoma of the Son did exist before the union — it was not the nature or qnoma of the Son which arose from the union, but another, as indeed (is the case) in the natural union of body and soul: it is not the nature of a soul or of a body existing, but the nature of a man[2].

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[1] This "question" appears to be more of a heading. Questions 8 and 9 below are discovered to be dislocated from this place and subsequently separated into two parts. See Louise Abramowski and Alan Goodman in *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*, Cambridge, 1972, p.xliii.

[2] The argument is difficult to follow due to some difficulty I had with the text. The general suggestion is that to insist on one "nature" means a tertium quid has arisen from the union, as the nature of a soul and the nature of a body in union form a "man".

7. If every qnoma which exists possesses an individuated essence, what is this individuated[1] essence in Christ, and from what general (essence) has it been separated out (individually)[2]?

8[3]. Is Christ, the Son of God, God in nature and in qnoma and man in nature and qnoma or not?

9. If yes, behold[4], there are two natures and two qnome, undoubtedly and assuredly; but if not, which of them is without a nature and without a qnoma? If, while the two of them are preserved in their natures and qnome, there arises from them one nature or one qnoma, does it possess (common) fellow natures or not? If it does, let them demonstrate what other qnoma there is which is established from divinity and humanity; but if it does not, then it is singular in its kind and is not consubtantial with God or with us.

Against those who say that God suffered in the flesh and died in the flesh.

1. If as the soul is united to the body naturally, so the divinity {570} of Christ is united naturally to his humanity, (then) as the soul is enclosed by the body finitely, and does not see or do or hear anything except through the senses of the body, and again is troubled, grieved, and fearful along with the body, so too the divinity is confined by the body finitely, and has need of it to fulfill its own work, and endures in it all its sufferings, with turmoil and fear and distress. If these (things) happen to the divinity, it has departed from its impassible nature. But if it is free of these things, how is it "naturally" united? If it is not "naturally" united, how did it establish "one" nature and suffer with the body? If a soul therefore suffers with the body naturally because it is naturally passible, but the Word of God is naturally impassible, how is it possible for it to suffer in the body?

2. If the soul — which, in a creaturely way, is immortal — is unable to die with the body, how did God the Word, who is essentially immortal, die with a body?

3. If in Christ our Lord immortal life exists in different ways, how is Christ not two natures, one which lives eternally and another which received life in time?[5]

4. If in a natural and qnomic union the divinity of our Lord is united to his humanity as his soul is united to his body, how, when the Godhead was with it in the tomb, did it not live and rise, but when his soul returned within his body it did live and rise? One of

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[1] ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ for ܝܚܝܕܝܐ.

[2] For ܘܡܢ ܐܝܕܐ ܟܠܢܝܘܬܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܐ. The argument rests upon the assumption that a qnoma is a singular exemplar of a common, or general, nature or essence. All these terms mean the same, except the latter two are general while qnoma is specific.

[3] See above on "question" 1.

[4] For ܗܐ ܗܐ. This could be ܐܗܐ ܐܗܐ, a derisory interjection. It would hardly be unusual, given the general temper of the debate, that a term of triumphant derision would be employed.

[5] The argument here refers to the existence of two different kinds of immortality, inherent in the Godhead and created in the soul of the manhood, neither of which died with the death of Christ's body.

two things: either the divinity is weaker than the soul, or the divinity was not naturally joined to a subsisting nature, but willingly and parṣopically for the support of the dispensation.

5. If, because the soul is joined unitedly to the body, a man is unable to die as long as its union is preserved, how, if the union of the divinity and humanity of Christ is natural, inasmuch as the union of Christ was not severed, did Christ die?

6. If one qnoma, when it dies, has need of another to raise it up, but the qnoma of Christ is one, how does Christ say concerning his body, "I will raise it up"?

7. If death is the deprivation of life, how is it possible for the life of God to be takenaway?

8. If anything that does not naturally suffer cannot suffer in anything, then God, who is naturally impassible, cannot suffer in the body.

{571} 9. If the soul should go out of the body it is the death of a man. When the soul of our Lord left his body, what died? The humanity which was composed of a body[1], or the divinity which was without composition?

10. If the body on account of this dies, (that is,) because the soul departs from it, for it lives by it, but the divinity does not live by the life of the soul, how, by the departure of the soul, is God said to die?

11. If by all means the one in need is other in nature and in qnoma than he (who) fulfills need, and (likewise with the one) "perfected" and the "Perfecter", and the (one) "raised" and the "Raiser" — and all these things are said in the Scriptures concerning Christ — how is it possible that these contrary things can be done by one to himself in one qnoma?

Against those who ask, "Is the holy Virgin the mother of God or the mother of man?"

1. We have learned from the Holy Scriptures the truth that the Virgin gave birth without marriage. So too, let us learn from the Scriptures who it was whom she bore: "The record of the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the Son of Abraham,"[2] and, "The birth of Jesus Christ was in this way,"[3] and, "A Savior is born to you today who is the Lord Christ, in the city of David,"[4] and, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah,"[5] and many such as these. Therefore, where can one who calls the holy Virgin simply

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[1] It would seem to me that "and of a soul" should naturally follow here.

[2] Mt. 1:1.

[3] Mt. 1:18.

[4] Lk. 2:11.

[5] Mt. 2:1.

"mother of God" flee from the impiety of those who deny the humanity of Christ? And how does one who simply calls the Virgin "mother of man" not agree with those who deny the Godhead of Christ? If by the invocation of the name "Christ" is to understand his divinity and his humanity together, he who confesses the Virgin "mother of Christ" in one true confession demolishes and annuls all impieties — (both) the denial of his divinity and the denial of his humanity.

2. If Christ is true God, and in that he is God he is from the Father without beginning, but in that he is man he has a beginning from the Virgin, how did she not give birth to him who "began to be" from her, and how did she give birth to him who eternally (is) and is not from her?

3. If, in that Christ is God, he is begotten of his Father eternally, and by the same token God is begotten of the Virgin in some way, he is found to be born twice in that he is God, but not even once in that he is man!

{572} 4. If the Virgin bore him who was fashioned in her by the Holy Spirit, and on account of this she gave birth to God, then the Holy Spirit also fashioned God. But if it is impossible for God the Word to be fashioned by the Holy Spirit, how is the Virgin the mother of God?

5. If apart from his divinity Christ is not God, but it is not in his Godhead that he was born of the Virgin, how is the Virgin the mother of God?

6. If, because Christ is God, therefore the Virgin is the mother of God, all the more, since Christ is man, ought the Virgin to be called the mother of man.

7. If he who calls the Virgin the mother of man calls Christ simple man, so he who names the Virgin mother of God calls Christ God stripped of humanity. Since he who is acknowledged to be born of the Virgin was necessarily the same who was circumcised, grew up in stature, wisdom, and grace, and was crucified, suffered and died according to the witness of Scripture, it is not for the honor of Christ or his mother that the heretics name the Virgin "mother of God," but that they may find opportunity to ascribe all these weaknesses and sufferings to God.

8. If there is no God who has a God, and no God who is greater than God, but it is said concerning Christ by the prophet, which the apostle interprets, "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows,"[1] who is the God of God the Word who anointed him, or who are his companions, above whom he is anointed?

Against those who falsely accuse us as those who confess in God a "quaternity" instead of a "Trinity."

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[1] Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:9.

1. [If] the Trinity is acknowledged (to be) consubtantial, how is something which is not of the nature of the Trinity considered a quaternity with the Trinity?

2. If the Trinity is confessed (to be) divinity, how is humanity with divinity reckoned four-fold?

3. If the qnome of the Trinity are acknowledged as eternal, how can a temporal qnoma [be counted] four-fold with an eternal one?

{573} 4. Again let them tell us: was the body from Mary different in its nature from the nature of the Trinity or not? If it is not different it is consubtantial with the Father and with the Spirit. But if it is different, we ask: as the body is different in its nature, is its qnoma different in the same way from the qnome of the Trinity or not? However, if it is not different, behold, a real quaternity is confessed by you! But if it is different, how, when you say "a difference of the body from the Trinity," you have not said "a quaternity," but when we say this we are saying "a quaternity"?

5. If the man from us, because he was united to God the Word, made an addition to the Trinity, so God the Word, because he was united to the man from us, made an addition to the number of men. But if this is impossible that God should be added to the number of men, it is also impossible that a man should be added to the number of the qnome of the divinity.

6. If God the Word, complete in his qnoma eternally, has introduced into his qnoma the humanity which he took, how did he not make an addition to his qnoma?

7. If something is added to the qnoma of the Word which it had never possessed, how is the qnoma of the Word not increased above the Father and the Spirit? How does the Trinity remain co-eternal? When in the one parṣopa of the one name, "Son," we know the Godhead and humanity of Christ together because of the union, by what necessity are we required to fall into a confession of a "quaternity"?

Against those who accuse us of a "duality" of sons.

1. Since it is not apart from the divinity of our Lord (that) one calls his humanity "Son of God" separately, but with the divinity unitedly, whence is one constrained to say "two sons"?

2. If in the union of God the Word with the body born from the blessed Mary we are not compelled to say "two sons from God the Father", but if when we say that, inasmuch as God the Word was begotten of the Father naturally, so the humanity was (also) begotten of the Father naturally, then we would be justly charged with (saying) "two sons", for where there are two sons they are brothers. But if there is no one who is thus mad to say that humanity [was] naturally begotten of the Father, or that God the Word has a

brother, but rather, (seeing) that in union with the Word in the Sonship of the Word he is one Son with him, how is he numbered in a "duality" of sons with God the Word?

{574} Again, an answer to what was asked: have the Nestorians or the monks turned aside from the foundation of the faith which the early teachers handed over? And until Nestorius, was there anyone who said that Christ was two natures and two qnome or not?

Because, therefore, it will (only) then be possible to be ascertained who it was who turned aside from the foundation of the faith of the early teachers when first the uprightness of faith in Christ has been shown, since the uprightness of faith from the Holy Scriptures, which are the teachers of Christianity, is especially capable of being understood, as also the advent of Christ and his dispensation for us is accurately and enlighteningly made known from the Scriptures, we will write briefly first that which the Holy Scriptures have taught concerning Christ, and then, through the teaching which is from the writings of the teachers before Nestorius, that which they said concerning Christ:

The Holy Scriptures, then, teach us in this way concerning Christ our Lord: he is complete God and complete man in one Sonship and in one Lordship, and one authority, one will, and one dispensation. Those things which are said concerning the divinity of Christ are these: The blessed David, in a prophecy which the apostle Paul interprets (to be) concerning Christ, spoke thus: "Your throne, O God, (is) for ever and ever,"[1] and again, "You laid the foundations of the earth from the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands."[2]

John the Evangelist said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[3]

The blessed Paul said, "He is the image of the glory of the Father, and the image of his Being," and "By him he made the worlds," and "he holds all by the power of his Word."[4]

And those things which concern the humanity of Christ are these: The blessed David, in a prophecy concerning Christ, spoke in this way: "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Because of this God has anointed you,"[5] etc.

In another place he says, "What is man that you have remembered him, and the son of man that you have visited him? You have made him somewhat less than the angels, with honor,"[6] etc. The blessed Paul interprets this, saying, "Therefore he who was somewhat lower than the angels we see to be Jesus because of the suffering of his death."[7]

Isaiah the prophet said, "Behold my servant in whom I have delighted, my beloved for whom my soul longed. I will place my Spirit upon him."[8] Our Lord, in the Gospel, interprets this (to be) concerning himself.

Peter, the head of the apostles, says, "Jesus the Nazarene, {575} a man from God, appeared to you with miracles, signs, and exploits which God worked among you by his hands."[9] And again, "Jesus from Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, is he who went round and healed those who were harmed by the Evil One, because God was with him."[1]

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[1] Ps. 45:6; Heb. 1:8.
[2] Heb. 1:10 (Cf. Ps. 102:25).
[3] Jn. 1:1.
[4] Cf. Heb. 1:2-3.
[5] Ps. 45:7.
[6] Ps. 8:4-5.
[7] Cf. Heb. 2:9.
[8] Mt. 12:18 (cf. Is. 42:1).
[9] Acts 2:22.

The blessed Paul says, "For he has established a day on which he is going to judge all the earth with justice through the man whom he designates."[2]

In another place he says, "God is one, and one is the Mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ."[3]

And from many other (things) which are distinctly said in the Holy Scriptures concerning the divinity and concerning the humanity of Christ which are in the same way in contrast with one another — those which are said concerning his divinity cannot be in the nature of his humanity — it is clearly evident that Christ is complete God and complete man. At (one) time he is called God, being complete in the nature and qnoma of divinity, and at (another) time he is called complete man, being complete in the nature and qnoma of humanity, and as, from the contrast of words which are said concerning Christ, it is known that Christ is two natures and two qnome, so also [from] what is said concerning the one Christ the Son of God it is known that Christ is one, not in a union of nature and qnoma, but in one parṣopa of Sonship, one authority, one dispensation, one power, and one Lordship.

From all these (things) it is clear that we have not turned aside from the foundation of the faith, who uprightly believe in Christ, that he is two natures and two [qnome]. But Severus and his disciples have turned aside, who confess one nature and one qnoma in Christ.

Also, from the discourse of the teachers prior to Nestorius this is clear:
Demonstrations from the Greek teachers concerning the same subject:

The blessed John, bishop of Constantinople, who from the beauty of his teaching was called the "mouth of gold", in a letter to Cæsarius the monk concerning the faith, wrote thus: "What Sheol has belched forth those who say that Christ is one nature?"

Again he says, "One ought to flee from those who in their madness say that Christ, after the union, is one nature, for they have attempted to say 'one nature' for this (reason): that they may attribute suffering and death to the impassible God."

Again he says, "Christ is impassible God and passible man, and this is very clear, for both natures are known in one Sonship, one Lordship, and one dispensation."

And in a discourse on the Epiphany he says, "Christ, who was baptized, received the Spirit and gave the Spirit. {576} The human nature, which was visible, received the Spirit, and the divine nature, which was hidden, gave the Spirit."

And in a discourse concerning "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" he says, "He who dwelt was not the same as he who was inhabited, but one dwelt in another; otherwise it was not an indwelling, for there is not anything which dwells in itself; but I say that one dwelt in another, for the natures were distinct. However, by the conjunction[4] and union, God the Word and man are one, while their natures are not confused or changed."

Again, in a discourse concerning the Ascension, he says, "Learn who it is who was taken up: what nature? the one which was from Mary."

Again he says, "We ought to know to what nature God said, 'Sit at my right hand': it is the one which heard (the words), 'You are dust, and you shall return to dust.'"

And in another discourse he says, "Christ, in the nature of his humanity, is our brother, but in honor he is infinitely superior to us."

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[1] Acts 10:38.
[2] Acts 17:31.
[3] 1 Tim. 2:5.
[4] ܢܩܦܘܬܐ.

The blessed Gregory, bishop of Nazianzus, in a letter concerning the faith, says, "On the one hand, two natures, God and man, but not two sons."

Again he says, "He is not the God of the Word, but of him who was visible, for how can there be a God for one who is God naturally?"

The blessed Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria, in a letter to Epictetus says, "Our fathers in Nicea did not say of the body, but of the Son, that he was consubtantial with his Father. Concerning the body they said that it was from Mary as the Scriptures teach."

Again he says, "If the body from the earth is consubtantial with God the Word, but God the Word is consubtantial with his Father, then also the Father is consubtantial with the body from the earth."

Again, in a discourse on the Incarnation he says, "Uncreated Being can only be said of Godhead, and since, concerning uncreated nature, it is an impiety to say that it is passible, so also to say that passible nature is uncreated is wickedness, and that the nature of humanity, which came afterwards, was not made for its union with the Word, but was coeternal with him, and to say that what suffered was of the same nature is an impiety."

The synod of the one hundred and fifty fathers who gathered in Constantinople, in a letter on the faith which they wrote to the western bishops, spoke in this way: "God the Word was perfect God before ages and times, and at the end of the age, for the salvation of us[1] men, he took from us a perfect man and dwelt in him."

Damasus, the bishop of Rome, and the bishops with him, in a letter on {577} the faith said, "Whoever says that in the passion and crucifixion God the Word underwent pain, and it was not the body and soul which he took from our race, shall be anathema."

Basil, the bishop of Cæsarea, in a discourse on three sayings of the apostle, says, "In that he wept for Lazarus his friend, and his tears came commensurately, he showed that the body was passible in its nature and consubtantial with our humanity."

Again he says, "That Christ ate for the sustenance of his body, which had need of food, and that he became weary from the journey of the road because the limbs grew weak, it was not that God in any way grew weary and was worn out, but to show that sufferings such as these were of the nature of the body."

Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, in a letter on the faith says, "The Son of God — O marvelous! — was passible in nature and impassible in nature. If in the nature of his divinity he is said (to be) passible, a difference of his nature from (the Father[2]) is indicated. But if the nature which we orthodox acknowledge in the nature of his humanity is passible, and the nature of his divinity is impassible, his consubtantiality with the Father is not corrupted. For we do not say[3] "one nature of divinity and humanity", like the madness of those who confound the natures[4].

Again he says, "Although in an incomprehensible union the two (are) one, yet it is not in nature."

Again he says, "Christ, though he is two natures, is accurately known in one single parṣopa of Sonship, without the properties of the natures being destroyed."

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[1] ܕܠܢ for ܕܠܝܢ.

[2] Add ܐܒܐ.

[3] ܐܡܪܝܢ for ܐܡܪܢ.

[4] ܟܝ̈ܢܐ for ܟܝܢܐ.

Atticus, bishop of Constantinople, in a letter on the faith according to "question and answer", says, "What is that which was destroyed? The body from Mary. And who is that which raised (it) up? The Word from the Father."

Again he says, "One is Christ, who died in the nature of his humanity, and rose up from the dead in the mighty nature of his divinity."

Again he says, "That which Paul said, that the Lord of glory was 'crucified' — it is not that he makes the two natures, which are distinct from one another, to be of the same nature[1] through the one designation 'glory', but he honors the lower nature with the designation 'glory' because of the excellence of the higher."

Again he says, "He who was called Jesus was the Son of God, not that his body was changed to the nature of his divinity, but because of his union with God the Word he received a name of equal glory."

Justin, the philosopher and martyr, in a discourse on the faith, says, "One is the Son of God in two natures. He did not undergo sufferings in the nature of his divinity which was begotten of God."

Again he says, "One is Christ, the Son of God, in two natures, one which was taken from us, and the other which was exalted above our nature."

Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, in a letter on the faith, says, {578} "The nature of God is distinct from that of man, for God did not become man, as it were, by a fall[2], nor did man become God, as it were, by upward progress, but Christ was God and man. It is clear, therefore, that the lowly words which concern Christ are appropriate to the man from Mary, and those which are marvelous and exalted to the nature of God the Word."

Again he says, "Christ, the Son of God, was born from Mary, not in the nature of his divinity, which was unbounded, but in the finite nature[3] of his humanity, for we say 'one Son in two natures.'"

Again he says, "Christ, the Son of God, suffered, not in his divinity, but in his humanity. I said that Christ suffered in the body. I did not say that the divinity suffered in the body. The nature of the divinity which 'took' remained impassible, yet God the Word considered his own — though he in no way endured — the sufferings of his temple. There is not another 'Son', I say, but another nature, for a distinction of natures is no impediment to the unity of the Son, for from the lowly nature of humanity and from the eternal nature of God the Word we say 'one parṣopa of Sonship.'"

Ambrose, bishop [of Milan], in a letter on the faith, says, "God the Word did not receive from the Virgin a beginning of his Being, but he took the nature of humanity from her and joined it with himself — though it was not mixed — yet in both natures one Son is known."

Again he says, "Those who say that both natures of Christ were mixed and became one nature, and do not believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is two natures, without mixture, in one parṣopa of Sonship — for one is Christ the Son of God — the holy Church anathematizes.

From all these things written above, and from other discourses of many teachers before Nestorius, it is clearly evident that Christ is two natures and two qnome, for when Christ is called God, it is not the three qnome of the Trinity, but the one qnoma of God the Word. Likewise when Christ is called man it is not all the qnome of humanity, but one qnoma which was taken from the race of men for union with God the Word. For a nature cannot exist without a qnoma, because the qnoma is singular, and multiple qnome are found to exist in one nature. But two natures or many cannot be in one qnoma unless first they become one nature, and from a union of nature are also called one qnoma. If, then, this is impossible, that an eternal nature and {579} unbounded spirit can be one nature with a created, bodily, and limited nature, it is clearly evident that Christ is two natures and two qnome, and because of the inseparable union of his divinity with his humanity, this is believed in one Sonship, Lordship, and authority, to whom, and to whose Father, and to the Holy Spirit belong glory and honor for ever and ever. Amen.

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[1] For ܫܘܝ ܒܟܝܢܐ.

[2] So Chabot's text; ms "by deceit".

[3] ܒܟܝܢܐ for ܒܢܟܝܐ.

A reply: With this discourse we have written down in a record, which was composed by us prior to this (time), that which can be known from Scriptures and from nature. So now, as a witness to the truth of those things which were said, we write briefly from the discourses of the teachers prior to Nestorius:

The same Athanasius who is written down above, in a letter on the faith, says, "Gabril the angel, when bringing good tidings to the Virgin, told her, 'He who is born from you is holy and shall be called the Son of the Highest.' He did not say 'in you' but 'from you', showing that it was not from another source[1], but he who was born was from the nature of the Virgin."

Again he says, "He who was born from Mary is man in nature, as we have learned from Holy Scriptures, and the body of Christ is truly consubtantial with us men, for Mary is our sister."

The blessed John, in a discourse on the Nativity, says, "On this day was born the Savior of the world — not the nature of the Only-begotten, for the birth of the Only-begotten does not consist in a numbering of days. Today Jesus Christ was born in the body."

Again he says, "He created and fashioned the first Adam from the earth: the power of the Holy Spirit fashioned the second Adam from the Virgin."

The blessed Basil, in a discourse upon the Holy Spirit, says, "It does not say 'through the woman', but 'from the woman', showing sufficiently the consubstantiality of him who was born with her who bore him."

From these things and from others like them it is clearly evident that he whom the holy Virgin bore, at the moment of the beginning of his fashioning, was united to God the Word, but he did not depart from his consubtantiality with his mother, and as a woman who bears a man composed of soul and body is not called the mother of a soul but the mother of a man, so too he who unfittingly confesses in Christ one nature and one qnoma composed of Godhead and humanity is obliged to name the Virgin, not mother of God, but mother of Christ, for by the name "mother of God" the humanity of Christ is not made known. But when, according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the blessed Virgin {580} is named "mother of Christ", the humanity and Godhead of Christ are alike made known, who in his divinity and in his humanity is one Son of God, to whom, and to whose Father, and to the Holy Spirit belong glory and honor, now, at all times, and for ever and ever. Amen.

The notary: When they wrote and took in before the king this composition of the faith, with the disputation joined to it, an answer from his presence did not come out to them, either because paganism was unable to understand the thinking of the pious mind, and because of this scorned it, or because the king showed favoritism to Gabril, the head of the sect of Theopaschite heretics.

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[1] Lit., "on the other side."

We here make an end of this discourse. It is finished.

(SYNOD OF MAR ṬIMATEOS I

790 AD)

{599} Again, with the help of God we write the first synod of Mar Ṭimateos the first, and the canons which were established by him and by the fathers who were present with him, and sent to the venerable Mar 'Aprim for all the province of 'Elam.

Ṭimateos the sojourner, by the mercies of God our Life-giver catholicos patriarch, with the bishops of the great and patriarchal province, and with the priests and faithful of the catholic cities[1]:

To the venerable of God, Mar 'Aprim, bishop metropolitan of Belapaṭ, and the hermits (and) bishops[2], as well as the priests and faithful who belong to the province of 'Elam, peace and tranquillity be to you in Christ, the Light of the world.

Your letter to us, which was sent by the hands of the chaste 'Abraham, the presbyter and hermit, we received and read with great joy, O our fathers and brothers, and Christ, our Lord and our God, who is the Cause of all benefits and who loosed the obstacle in the midst and the enmity through his own flesh[3], we have worshipped and praised, and have offered sacrifices {600} of glory and of thanksgiving to his honor. We applaud the great diligence and prudence which at all times and now you have shown for the keeping of the canons, which are the pathways which lead to heaven and the highways which convey to the kingdom of God, who delivered us from the dominion of darkness, bringing us to the kingdom of his beloved Son[4]. Who is more appropriate than you to take up the burden for the Church of God, O our honored brothers? For you are those whose excellency, among all previous generations, has shown itself like the rays of the sun in the firmament of the Catholic (Church), and you have shone upon the Church of God like the stars upon the heavens. Also it is not with bare and ordinary words alone, but even more, some of you have adorned and embellished the catholic Church with their own blood. Therefore it is nothing marvelous if they who have confirmed the truth of the Church with their own blood should also, through word and diligence, strengthen and establish her canons. Because of this we too, with one agreement of mind, have been made partakers with your splendor in those divine (matters) by which the crown of the comely majesty of the Church is preserved, establishing the "feet" of our thoughts carefully and unshakenly upon the true rock of the canons and decrees of the Church — those which were sealed from time to time by our fathers, the apostles and bishops, whether these be of the Greeks or of the Syrians, that is to say, the Persians — but especially, by virtue of the matter just now under consideration, upon the canons and decrees which were written in the letter from Mar 'Aba, catholicos and martyr, the sixth, which was styled "Synodal"[5].

Since after the departure from earth to heaven of the holy of memory, Ḥnanišo', who was patriarch, we, as the paternal canons require, summoned your venerability, through a letter (carried by) messengers, as is well-known to everyone, together with the rest of the metropolitans and bishops who are designated, and some of them came according to the summons as per the canons, some in person and some by their agreement, but some of them not even by their agreement, delaying through negligence, or because of one reason or another, such as indeed your venerability happened to suffer. We spoke at that time by virtue of the ordination of the holy of memory, Mar Ḥnanišo‘, but now (we speak) by virtue of this (our own) consecration which has earlier taken place. Those who came as they were called performed the ordination of the patriarch hurriedly, but you, who negligently did not come, were in an uproar, and you hindered yourself from fellowship with the patriarch for two years, more or less. In order that something like that may not happen in our days or after us, and from {601} the negligence of some or from the haste of others, division should be engendered in the Church and faction grow, we have established this decree and have confirmed it by the canon of the "Word of God", and no one may venture to transgress it, by the "Word of God", who holds dominion (in) heaven and earth and governs [all].

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[1] I.e., Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

[2] ?for ܘܚܝܪ̈ܐ ܐܦܣܩܘ̈ܦܐ, or, "monk-bishops."

[3] Eph. 2:15.

[4] Col. 1:13.

[5] ܦܪܘܠܝܘܐ.

First canon: When the patriarch departs from temporal life, the bishop of Kaškar shall come with his brother bishops of the great province to the catholic cities, and with the agreement of the cities they shall write and send, first to the metropolitan of 'Elam and his bishops, then to him of Baṣra, and the rest who are designated in the synodal letter, and they shall be diligent about their coming for the ordination of the patriarch. The bishops and citizens of the cities are not allowed to set their hands to the election, agreement, and ordination of the patriarch before the metropolitan of 'Elam comes, and the metropolitans appointed, each with three bishops, from all the provinces, or they send their agreement in their handwriting, by the "Divine Word" which holds the dominion of heaven and earth. If they venture to presume against or transgress this decree, let them be strangers[1] and proscribed from the Church in heaven and the Church on earth, along with the product of their presumption, that is, the "abortion"[2] which they have produced, by the "Word of our Lord".

Again too, the metropolitan of 'Elam, with the metropolitans and bishops designated, after being written to by the bishops of the great province and the citizens (of the cities), are not allowed to neglect their personal coming or the sending of their agreement to their brothers, immediately and without delay, when they receive the letters from them, by the "Divine Word" which holds dominion in heaven and on earth. If neither in person nor by agreement they participate with their brothers, they shall be strangers and proscribed from the Church in heaven and on earth, by the "Word of the omnipotent Lord", and those who are gathered are empowered, according to the canons, to do everything legally and in order.

Second canon: The bishops or metropolitans shall not be allowed to require (as tribute) sees or monasteries of the patriarchal see illegally, or utterly any bribe, whether great or small, from him who is set apart to stand at their head, whether prior to ordination or after ordination, nor again may the faithful of the cities be allowed to demand for themselves a bribe or honors from him who is made. He {602} who gives or promises, and he who demands anything such as this for himself, if he is a bishop or metropolitan, shall be cast out of his rank. If he is a believer or a cleric he shall be suspended from the Church, by the "Word of the omnipotent Lord".

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[1] ܢܘܒܪ̈ܝܐ for ܢܘܟܪ̈ܝܐ.

[2] ܫܝܠܐ for ܫܝܬܐ.

Third canon: He who is not adorned with excellence, and does not radiate with a pure mind, and is not mingled with the rays of the orthodox faith and with a knowledge of the Scriptures, may not be elected and may not apply himself to this fearful and divine ministry. Those who elect one who is like this are worthy of judgment, but one who offers himself while he is devoid of adornments such as these is condemned to the fire.

Fourth canon: Any one of the bishops, hermits, or faithful who is accused of the heresy of Messalianism, or whatever it might be, shall not be allowed, by the "Word of our Lord", to minister his rank or to participate in the Church or the Mysteries, before he anathematizes in writing, in the presence of the universal Church, this evil teaching.

We confirm these words with the pearls of the sayings of Mar 'Aba, catholicos and martyr, which were set forth in the sixth letter, styled "Practica,"[1] as it were, with a royal seal.

The canon of Mar 'Aba the catholicos:

"We have decreed and determined — I, 'Aba the patriarch, and we, the metropolitans and bishops — and have bound ...... them with the "amen" of all Christendom."

But matters concerning the paternal and synodical canons and what is lacking will be provided in a (special) chapter (such) as the present one when God commands us again to form a general council of the fathers, the bishops, either with you or with us, and we will (then) complete them. However, we desire you to know this as well, our beloved, that it is not from pride or from negligence that we did not come to you, but because of the rebuilding of churches which have been destroyed, and because of other pressing reasons. However, if God, the Lord of all, commands and the king accepts our petition — God preserve his life! — by the rebuilding of churches — for six times we have gone before him in this matter — when the hard questions in which we are ensnared as though in shackles are resolved, we (shall) come for your sight and for your greeting through God — may he strengthen you to fulfill his will all the days of your life. Be strong and pray for us. Grace (be) with you. Amen.

I, Ṭimate'os, by grace catholicos patriarch, have signed and sealed.
I, Sargis, metropolitan of Prat dMaišan, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Brik Baroyeh, bishop of Kaškar, have subscribed and sealed.
{603} I, Yu'el, bishop of Ḥirta, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Grigor, bishop of Zabe, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Yoḥanan, bishop of Piroz Šabur, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Daniyel, bishop of Beit Daraye, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Ṣlibazka, bishop of Ṭariḥan, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Šubḥalmaran, bishop of Šenna, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Gabril of Qube dArzon, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Sabrišo', bishop of Nihawand, have subscribed and sealed.
I, Biro, presbyter and archdeacon of the catholicos, have subscribed and sealed.

The canons which were ordered by the venerable Mar Ṭimate'os the patriarch and the bishops with him, and were sent for the sake of peace to Mar 'Aprim, the metropolitan of 'Elam, are ended.

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[1] I.e., a synodal letter.

Book of the Ordering of Ecclesiastical Rules[1]

{609} Second Chapter: the number of the canonical writings which the Church of the East accepts, agrees with, and observes.

These are the western and eastern synods, and the apostolic and paternal synods which the holy and orthodox Church of the East continues in and accepts:

Western:

1: The canons of the Holy Apostles: 27 canons.
2: Again, of the Apostles: 81 canons.
3: Of the twelve Apostles: 10 sections.
4: Synod of Ancyra: 24 canons.
5. Synod of Neocæsaria: 14 canons.
6: Synod of Nicea: 20 canons.
{610} 7: The ecumenical synod: 73 canons.
8: Synod of Gangra: 20 canons.
9: Synod of Antioch: 25 canons.
10. Synod of Laodicea: 59 canons.
11: Synod of Constantinople: 4 canons.
12: Synod of Chalcedon: 27 canons.

Eastern:

13: Synod of ’Isḥaq the catholicos and Maruta of Maiparqaṭ.
14: Synod of Mar Yahbalaha the catholicos.
15: Synod of Mar Dadišo‘ the catholicos.
16: First synod of Barṣauma, metropolitan of Nisibis.
17: Second synod of Barṣauma, metropolitan of Nisibis.
18: Third synod of Barṣauma, metropolitan of Nisibis.
19: Synod of Mar ’Aqaq the catholicos.
20: Synod of Mar Babai the catholicos.
21: Synod of Mar Yausep the catholicos.
22: Synod of Paulos, metropolitan of Nisibis.
23. Synod of Mar ’Aba the catholicos.
24: Synod of Mar Ḥazqiel the catholicos.
25: Synod of Mar Išo‘yahb the catholicos.
26: Synod of Mar Grigor the catholicos.
27: Synod of Mar Sabrišo‘ the catholicos.
28: Canons of Mar Ḥnanišo‘ the catholicos.
29: Canons of Mar Ṭimate’os the catholicos.
30: Synod of Mar Ṭimate’os the catholicos.
31. Canons of Mar Išo‘barnun the catholicos.
32: Canons of Mar Giwargis the catholicos.
33: Canons of Mar Yoḥanan the catholicos.
34: Canons of Mar ’Eliya the catholicos.
35: Canons of the Greek Christian kings.
36: Canons of Šem‘on, metropolitan of Rew-’Ardašir.
37: Canons of Išo‘bokt, metropolitan of Fars.
38: Canons of ‘Abdišo‘ bar Bahri, metropolitan of ’Ator.
{611} 39: Canons of Giwargis, metropolitan of ’Ator.

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[1] This is an appendix to Chabot’s text which is taken from the canonical writings of ‘Abdišo‘, bishop of Nisibis (d. 1318). It is an extract from ‘Abdišo‘s revision of the corpus of canon law, included here to indicate those canonical sources which are authoritative in the East Syrian Church. What follows is from the second chapter of the first of two books.

40: Canons of Mar ʻAbdišoʻ the catholicos.